

SFX

268

A long time
ago in a
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far, far
away....

Future



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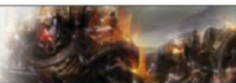
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46

STAR WARS

"JJ would geek out at moments he was involved in planning"

**DC TV**

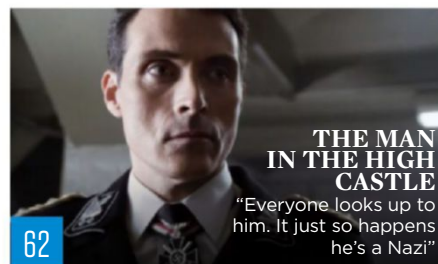
"There will be multiple earths, a multiverse"

74

**JESSICA JONES**

"False eyelashes and hairspray weren't allowed on set"

66

**THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE**

"Everyone looks up to him. It just so happens he's a Nazi"

62

FEATURES

▶ ON THE COVER!**46 STAR WARS**

With the biggest movie in a million galaxies almost upon us, here's our packed 11-page celebration of *The Force Awakens*. Feel the Force!

60 CLOSE ENCOUNTER

It's 'er out of *Game Of Thrones* and *Mockingjay* (but not *Star Wars*) Natalie Dormer.

62 THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE

Philip K Dick's "Nazis won the war" story comes to TV.

66 JESSICA JONES

Inside Netflix and Marvel's new superpowered PI show.

70 TIME MACHINE

And here's how Jessica Jones

was back in the *Alias* comic that inspired the show.

74 DC TV EXTRAVAGANZA

Taking a look at the mighty multitude of DC superheroes arriving on the small screen.

80 BROUGHT TO BOOK

British author Emma Newman tells us how she kept on going through an awful year.

82 HEROES & INSPIRATIONS

Zombie creator Greg Nicotero on, well... the clue's in the title.

86 VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN

James McAvoy and Daniel Radcliffe discuss their twisted new take on Mary Shelley.

▶ RED ALERT (NEWS)**7 THE FRANKENSTEIN CHRONICLES**

It's that man again! Check out the new TV series starring Sean Bean.

17 FREEZE FRAME

Analysing the twisty trailer for *Pride And Prejudice And Zombies*.

▶ FIRST CONTACT**30 YOUR LETTERS**

Will you miss Clara? Why is *Gotham* not on? And more!

33 WIN BB-8

Cutest robot ever could be yours!

36 WISHLIST

SFX's lifeblood (that's you, dear readers) dream *Doctor Strange*.

▶ REVIEWS**92 CRIMSON PEAK**

Step into del Toro's creepy house.

96 INSIDE OUT

Another peach from Pixar.

▶ VIEWSCREEN**122 FEAR THE WALKING DEAD**

Was the spin-off worth the effort?

▶ REGULARS**38 BOOK CLUB**

Dave Hutchinson on *Adrift On The Sea Of Rains* by Ian Sales.

40 OPINION

Langford, Burton and Dreadful on bad grammar, D&D and... horror.

129 BLASTERMIND

Know your Christopher Lee?

130 TOTAL RECALL

Da da da dah dah... yes, it's "The Imperial March!"

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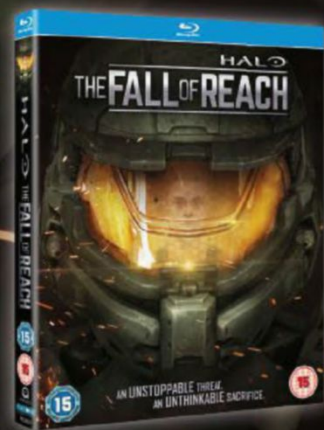
Check out p28 for details

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Rants & Raves

INSIDE THE SFX HIVE MIND

RICHARD EDWARDS EDITOR

RAVES

→ Really impressed with what I've seen so far of *Jessica Jones*. After *Daredevil*, the Netflix shows are threatening to become my favourite part of the MCU.
→ *What We Do In The Shadows* was fantastic, so loving the idea of Taika Waititi directing *Thor: Ragnarok*. Will it be a mockumentary about Norse gods?



NICK SETCHFIELD FEATURES EDITOR

RAVES

→ Impressed by *Jekyll And Hyde*. Love the '30s pulp feel – and more power to Charlie Higson for giving kids some high-grade nightmare fuel in ITV's old *Bullseye* slot.
→ Moon Knight's always been one of my fave comic book characters, so very excited by the thought of him coming to TV.



IAN BERRIMAN HOME ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

RAVES

→ Delighted *The Returned* has, er, returned. Just wish I could remember anything about season one.
→ Hope *In The Flesh* creator Dominic Mitchell's idea of an *In The Flesh* movie happens.
→ Horror doc *Fear Itself* is worth a watch: <http://bit.ly/fearits>.



JORDAN FARLEY COMMUNITY EDITOR

RAVES

→ Current *Force Awakens* excitement level: *Star Wars* kid after six cans of Red Bull.
→ The attack on Alexandria in *The Walking Dead* was one of the show's finest hours, and barely a zombie in sight.
→ *Life Is Strange* put me through the emotional wringer – thoroughly recommended.



RUSSELL LEWIN PRODUCTION EDITOR

RAVES

→ Surprised myself by finding that I think *Supergirl* looks quite fun.
→ Liked *The Lobster* although it went on a bit. Part set in hotel best; nice hotel that.
→ Finally saw *Age Of Ultron*: boy, that's one well-stuffed olive.
→ Now halfway through *Who's* season. Prefer it to last year's, but that's not saying too much.



JONATHAN COATES ART EDITOR

RAVES

→ *Lego Doctor Who* is great! Not least because I can use the Twelfth Doctor's head to create a Malcolm Tucker minifigure.
→ Disappointed that Midichlorians didn't feature in the latest *Force Awakens* trailer. Assume they'll be referenced in the final movie, perhaps as an added ingredient in the Slusho!



CATHERINE KIRKPATRICK DEPUTY ART EDITOR

RAVES

→ The final *Hunger Games* = excited!
→ Very late to the party but I've finally found time to watch *The Walking Dead*. Two seasons in and I'm hooked...
RANTS
→ ...however, I'm failing miserably to not spoil the latest season for myself.



ADRIAN HILL AD MANAGER

RAVES

→ *SPECTRE*, or should I call it "SPECTRE-ular". A brilliant action-packed Bond movie, like I remember Bond films being as a kid.
→ And the *Star Wars* trailer made me feel seven years old again too! Really made me want to watch *Swap Shop* and cuddle up to my pet dinosaur "Posh Paws".



LAUREN O'CALLAGHAN GR+ FILM & TV EDITOR

RAVES

→ Excited to see the Wasp will have a substantial part to play in the *Ant-Man* sequel. It's about time a female superhero was on equal footing with her male equivalent.
RANTS
→ I was never huge Clara fan and now we know she's leaving *Who*, I just can't wait to get rid of her!



WILL SALMON WRITER

RAVES

→ Radio 4's *Fright Night* was excellent – I loved the new version of *The Stone Tape* (see p119).
→ Absolutely adore Gilbert Hernandez and Darwyn Cooke's new comic, *The Twilight Children*. Beautiful, evocative stuff.
→ *Comic Heroes* is back and I'm the new editor! I hope you'll check out our new issue, out now.



It's safe to say I wouldn't be writing this editorial if it wasn't for *Star Wars*. As for many people born in the '70s and '80s, it was the formative cultural experience of my childhood, my gateway into sci-fi and fantasy. For a long time I think I loved the idea of *Star Wars* as much as the movies themselves – I know I saw the original movie on TV when I was very small (that image of C-3PO and R2-D2 in the desert made an indelible impression on my young mind), but I was just as captivated by the action figures, the spaceships and my *Return Of The Jedi* duvet cover.

When I was old enough to actually get the movies, I was even more besotted. I watched my off-the-telly recording of *The Empire Strikes Back* so many times that I knew where the ad breaks would come. Even now when I watch the film I expect the skeleton from the Scotch ads to pop up during the Cloud City sequence and tell me to "re-record not fade away".

If you were bitten by the *Star Wars* bug as a kid, I don't think you ever really grow out of it – and why should you? There's a reason adults shed tears when Han Solo told Chewbacca they were home. Luke, Leia, Han, Chewie, Lando, C-3PO, R2-D2 and the rest are part of our collective consciousness in a way few other fictional characters can match. So the arrival of *The Force Awakens* – the biggest movie of SFX's lifetime – is definitely something to celebrate. Set your nav computer to p46.

Rich

Richard Edwards, Editor
@RichDEdwards

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See me on page 48



RICH'S PICTURE BY OLLY CURTIS

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→ NEWS /// INTERVIEWS /// INSIGHT /// BEAN! → *edited by Jordan Farley*

CREATOR EXCLUSIVE!

FRANK TALK

Sean Bean
investigates a spate
of gruesome murders
in *The Frankenstein
Chronicles*

→ Wouldn't you know it, you wait ages for a new version of *Frankenstein* to show up and three come along at once. Daniel Radcliffe's big-screen *Victor Frankenstein* is due in December (and previewed on p86), while Fox are giving the Creature a modern day makeover with *Lookingglass* in January. But first off the slab is *The Frankenstein Chronicles*, where Sean Bean's bobby hunts a killer stitching bits of his young victims back together in 19th century London. The flat-top influx may seem sudden, but writer/director Benjamin Ross reckons *Frankenstein* is always lurking in the shadows. →

Highlights



12 SILENT FRIGHT

→ A boy accidentally summons a demon in creepy Christmas horror *Krampus*.



13 DEAR JOHN

→ John Hurt's War Doctor takes the fight to the Daleks in audio drama *Only The Monstrous*.



16 END OF DAYS

→ Earth welcomes its alien Overlords as Syfy adapts Arthur C Clarke's *Childhood's End*.

SCI-FACT! *The Frankenstein Chronicles* shares a producer with *Game Of Thrones*, who recommended several locations around Belfast.

“It’s just the right balance to keep you close to Sean Bean’s head”

“If you poke around he’s always been there,” Ross tells Red Alert. “I think that’s partly because the book’s in the public domain, and you know you’re going to find an audience for it. But it’s deeper than that. It’s a very modern creation myth. The afterlife and resurrection, these themes are still on people’s minds.”

What sets *The Frankenstein Chronicles* apart from its competition (apart from the all-important Sean Bean factor) is the way it blends fact and fiction. The show begins 14 years after the publication of *The Modern Prometheus*. Mary Shelley is a character in the show, as is William Blake, a young Charles Dickens and several politicians of the day, while one of the plot’s key catalysts is the Anatomy Act of 1832, designed to put grave robbers out of business. In coming up with the story, Ross was inspired by Sarah Wise’s social history book *The Italian Boy*, about the investigation into the delivery of a child’s body at a teaching hospital, a body so fresh he could only have been murdered.

“I looked into making [*The Italian Boy*], and it turned out a number of people had tried and failed,” Ross explains. “Then I thought, ‘Here’s the real world behind *Frankenstein*.’ Bodies overflowing from graveyards, different attitudes towards the afterlife, conflict between science and religion... So I thought, instead of doing the true story behind *Frankenstein*, why not do this as *Frankenstein* and inhabit the imaginative reality of that book, but with a view to returning to the conditions that made it so potent in the first place.”

The show started life as a film franchise in Ross’s mind before a meeting with executive producer Tracey Scofield saw it become a six-parter for ITV Encore. “Originally we had Channel 4 in mind, and they wanted eight parts,” Ross recalls. “But I think we wound up with the perfect number because it’s a very contained story. It’s focused on the experience of the main character, so it’s just the right balance to keep you close to Sean Bean’s head.”

LIFE IMITATING ART

Bean plays John Marlott, a widowed DI who discovers the washed-up body of a young girl in the show’s opening moments – a monstrous composite corpse with the limbs of several children sewn together. Unlike the show’s historical figures, Marlott is an original



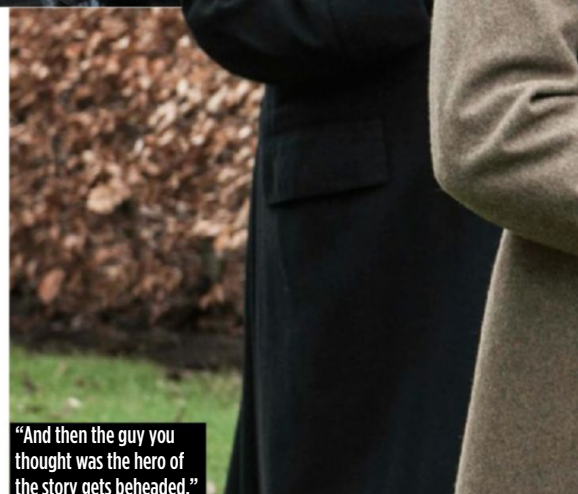
Whatever he’s pointing at, Sean Bean ain’t interested.

character. “There is a detective figure in [*The Italian Boy*], very different from Marlott, but that was the starting point,” Ross says. “It led me to the realisation that you can tell the Frankenstein story as a procedural and approach it from the outside as somebody who’s trying to figure out what’s going on. We run with the idea that if there was somebody doing these experiments it could mean a number of different things, particularly in light of the fact that the book’s already been written. Is somebody imitating the book?”

But what about Doctor Frankenstein and his infamous Creature? There’s talk of a monster abducting children among London’s street urchins. And obviously *someone* is stitching bodies back together. But Ross is tight-lipped on how much of them we’ll get to see.

“When you’re in the world of *Frankenstein* you’ve got to invoke monsters and the fear that they’ll appear, but detective stories are very hard technically,” Ross explains. “They’re a bit like a magic act. You’ve got to keep a lot of different theories alive in an audience’s mind in order to guide them to a revelation that’s satisfying. It’s made doubly technical when you’re dealing with something like *Frankenstein*, where audiences are bringing their own level of expectation to it. That’s really the big test of something like this: to what extent do you draw on the familiar and then turn it so it’s surprising? Hopefully you’ll get a perspective which is not what we’re used to.” ●

The Frankenstein Chronicles airs from 11 November on ITV Encore.



“And then the guy you thought was the hero of the story gets beheaded.”



Anna Maxwell Martin plays Mary Shelley.

You won’t believe what the papers are saying about Cameron now.



People didn't discover how to knot a tie properly until the 1840s.

IT'S ALIVE!

Further *Frankenstein Chronicles*, er, chronicles

KEEPING IT REAL

→ Despite the show's fantastical elements, Ross worked hard to ground it in a world that felt authentic. "I had a very strong sense of what I was looking for," Ross says. "I felt that we needed something rough. We went into these very rundown places, dilapidated landscapes that were more what the basis of the city experience would have been in those days. The other aspect is the ruralness of it, which is quite foreign to the modern city experience. My conception of the story was rooted in an attempt to recreate that reality."

THE BIG SLEEP

→ Like all good mysteries *The Frankenstein Chronicles* has a dogged investigator at its heart, one modelled on a classic PI. "Generically Marlott's a movie detective and I suppose I was thinking of Marlowe when I named him Marlott," Ross explains. "I was thinking of Raymond Chandler and my favourite detective movies, things like *The Big Sleep* and *Chinatown*, and is there a way to get that noirish element into this story in a way that's appropriate to England at the time that it's set? That's one of the stylistic elements that's in there in the way it's designed and shot."



We're assuming he dies at some point.

ONE MAN BAND

→ Ross wrote and directed all six episodes, something exceedingly rare on TV. "It's what I am really. It's what I do. And it's a very personal project for me. I felt it would be done best if I were allowed that kind of authority over it. It gives it a stylistic cohesion and becomes a kind of modern novel at that level. That was the ambition – a modern version of a Victorian gothic novel. That was ultimately what I hoped to achieve."

FAVOURITE FRANK

→ But what is Ross's preferred Frankenstein? "Gosh, I've got a lot of favourites. I grew up on Karloff, it was probably my first great movie obsession when I was about eight or nine. I loved *Bride Of Frankenstein*. I love at least the first three or four Hammer Frankensteins. They would probably be top for me. There was a Warhol-produced film called *Flesh For Frankenstein*. It was done in 3D so I made a pilgrimage to see the guts come out of this guy's stomach. And of course I loved *Young Frankenstein*. I suppose you're going quite far back in time to touch a Frankenstein that really appealed to me."

SCI-FACT! *Tripped's* fight coordinator Andreas Petrides was Ewan McGregor's stunt double in *Episode I*.

ON SET EXCLUSIVE

INBETWEEN REALITIES

Explore the multiverse with new E4 series *Tripped*

➔ “The best bit of direction I’ve ever been given was, ‘Have you ever played *Arkham Asylum* on Xbox, and he goes into detective mode?’” Referring to a special gadget that highlights usable objects and scenery, director Jamie Stone’s advice to stars George Webster and Blake Harrison reveals that E4’s new sci-fi comedy *Tripped* owes a deep debt to videogames and other assorted geekery.

Resembling *Misfits* crossed with *Doctor Who*, the four-part series plays fast and loose with the concept of parallel universes. Based on a pilot by *Who* writer Jamie Mathieson called *Alt* (which we reported on a year ago, but never aired), it is written and co-created by *The Missing*’s Harry and Jack Williams. With Webster joking, “You look like Aragorn, so run like Aragorn,” Harrison sports an impressive beard and wears a dandyish long-coat when Red Alert meets the pair at a Surrey film studio.

With Danny and his parallel universe counterparts a veritable world away from *The Inbetweeners*’ feckless Neil, Harrison admits that it’s been “an interesting balancing act”, keeping track of his character’s various iterations. “There are certain things that you’re allowed to play with and make different,” he says. “What’s great is how the costume and make-up departments have done a fantastic job of helping us do that. You just look at them and know they’re different. So finding and playing those differences has been a lot of fun, but you still have to keep it rooted in the fact that this is still technically the same person, it’s just their life that’s slightly different.”

“I gave mine Tourette’s, and a twitch,” continues Webster. “There’s reasons for that, as you’ll see. Psychologically, he’s quite damaged.”



This new 3D television was a little *too* real for the living room.

“Without giving too much away, there are definitely some heroic elements there”

Overcome by his best mate Danny’s decision to wed his girlfriend Kate (played by Georgina Campbell), Webster’s perpetually stoned slacker Milo has his world turned upside down after “War Danny” crashes down to earth in his living room. As Red Alert looks on, Harrison breaks a coffee table in half before dusting himself down and embarking upon a ferocious sword fight with Richard Gadd’s otherworldly assassin, Callum. “We genuinely really hate each other, so I really want to take his head off,” he laughs, while according to Webster, “I genuinely don’t do anything in life, so I just sit there and watch it.”

Comparing its visiting different dimensions to *Secret Wars* and *Spider-Verse*, *Tripped* has much in common with recent superhero crossovers. “With both War Danny and War Milo, you could argue to a point that they’re heroic,” says Harrison. “Without giving too much away, there are definitely some heroic elements there.”

“We play on that whole hero thing,” teases Webster. “These guys are heroes and then different things happen and shit goes down!”

With Harrison revealing “there’s been a few death scenes; multiple death scenes for multiple us-es,” dying is not necessarily the end for Danny and Milo. “The thing is, no one really dies in sci-fi anyway,” laughs Harrison. “There’s always a way to bring them back; even if you stick their brain in a robot or something like that.”

“Stick them in a tight little bottled city like [Superman’s] Kandor,” adds Webster. “And then bring them back out.” ●

Tripped is on E4 in November.





AERIAL ASSAULT SCI-FI TV ROUND UP

NEWBIES

→ X-Men universe x-panding into TV with **Legion** on FX and **Hellfire** at Fox.

→ FX developing Brian K Vaughan's beloved comic

Y: The Last Man.

→ George RR Martin's werewolf novella **Skin Trade** snapped up by Cinemax.

→ Marvel comedy **Cleanup Crew** ordered to pilot at ABC.

→ Terry Gilliam may bring

Time

Bandits

to TV for Amazon.

→ **Game Of Thrones** producers

writing fantasy series **The**

Perished Land.

→ HBO in early talks to make a

Watchmen series with Zack Snyder.

→ The CW bringing Clive

Barker's novel

Weaveworld to TV.

→ Kenneth

Calhoun's mystery

Black Moon

heading to Hulu.

→ Horror comic

Hack/Slash being

adapted for TV.

→ Lionsgate

developing the

Kingkiller

Chronicles as

a TV show.

→ Top author

Patrick Ness to

script **Doctor Who**

spin-off **Class** for

BBC Three.



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CHRIS HARDWICK

AMERICA'S "KING OF THE NERDS"
 HOSTS THE **WALKING DEAD** CHAT
 SHOW **TALKING DEAD**

Favourite SF/fantasy films

→ **District 9** is one of the most fantastic SF films. Also, when you consider what the budget was... You see a movie like **District 9** and you're like, "Alright, **Transformers**, ya got no excuse!" Horror... I love **Phantasm**. **Nightmare On Elm Street 3: Dream Warriors** is one of my favourites. I also love contemporary horror... Korean horror and British horror and American horror. British horror will take its time in developing characters, and the stories go a little more in depth. Korean horror is genuinely horrifying. And American horror is very bloody.

Favourite SF/fantasy TV shows

→ **Doctor Who** is one of my favourite shows. I know a lot of the current casts, and one of the most genuinely embarrassing moments of my life was being at Comic-Con and running into Matt Smith while dressed as David Tennant and having to explain it. It's like running into your current girlfriend with your ex-girlfriend: "I have a bow tie too! I just didn't bring it!"

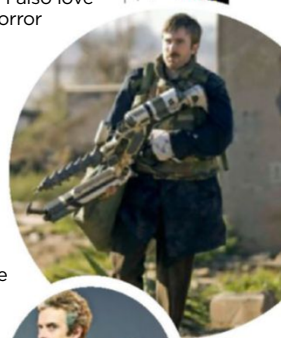
Favourite SF/fantasy comics and books

→ I love **Saga**, **Y: The Last Man**, **Locke & Key**, **Sweet Tooth**... I still love **Pet Sematary**. It is a phenomenal book; and when I was getting bullied in school I was very smug about my giant pet sematary. I love that kind of classic Stephen King horror.

Favourite SF/fantasy hero

→ I've always loved characters that were able to outsmart people without having to resort to playing the game of just beating the shit out of them. **Doctor Who**, Val Kilmer in **Real Genius**, Peter Parker... Those are the characters that I gravitate towards.

Talking Dead is currently airing on Fox UK.



“DON'T QUOTE ME”
 “HAPPY BACK TO THE FUTURE DAY,
 @REALMIKEFOX! EVER THINK
 ABOUT THE FACT THAT WE LIVE IN
 THE FUTURE WE DREAMED OF
 THEN? THAT'S HEAVY, MAN.”

Is anyone surprised that Obama is a *BTTF* fan?



SCI-FACT! Krampus previously featured in top *Supernatural* tear-jerker "A Very Supernatural Christmas".

5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT...

KRAMPUS

The horror that revives the nightmare of Christmas, without a fusty relative in sight

IT HAS HOLIDAY SPIRIT

1 After setting 2007's *Trick 'r Treat* around Halloween, director Michael Dougherty is now exploring the darker side of everyone's favourite time of year. "I'm fascinated by all the holidays," he tells Red Alert. "With Christmas and Halloween especially, we're encouraged by customs and traditions to believe in magic. Both holidays stretch back to pagan times, as they're really pre-Christian holidays that have been Christianised, so many of the traditions that we hold so dear have strange mystical connotations that lend themselves well to films like this."

HE KNOWS IF YOU'VE BEEN NAUGHTY

2 Known as the Christmas Devil, *Krampus* is based on an old North European myth about a half-goat/half-demon, who hands out considerably more brutal treatment to bad children than filling their stocking with coal. "He's sometimes called the Shadow of St Nicholas or the Anti-Santa," says Dougherty. "But if you dig a little deeper, you find out that Krampus predates Santa so it's actually more appropriate to call Santa the Anti-Krampus. What's really fun with this creature is that he's a sort of gateway into a much deeper mythology, and there's something fun about learning the truth about a holiday we all know so much about."

IT'S A TWISTED FAIRYTALE

3 With Dougherty noting that, "it's a mix of horror, comedy, fantasy and dark fairytales," Krampus harks back to '80s classics like *Poltergeist* and *Gremlins* as well to the more sinister likes of *An American Werewolf In London*, *A Nightmare On Elm Street* and *Hellraiser*. "Those films were trippy, borderline surreal horror films," he recalls. "They were much more creative and looser with their rules whereas a lot of genre films we have nowadays are very grounded to the point where they're dismal. We wanted to create something that had a bit more of a fantastical feel to it."

IT'S TWO FILMS IN ONE

4 Starring Toni Colette, Adam Scott and Alison Tolman, the film centres on a young family who are haunted by the vengeful Christmas spirit after their young son declares his disbelief in Santa. "We needed to cast actors that you would think would star in a normal Christmas drama because that's how the film starts out," explains Dougherty. "The first act is really a straight-up Christmas movie with comedic elements but then it shifts, so part of the fun was finding actors that could really pull off that sudden genre switch."

KRAMPUS HAS HELP

5 Brought to gruesome life by Weta Workshop and Weta Digital, Dougherty resorted to a combination of digital and old-school effects to bring *Krampus*'s numerous minions to the screen. "We have a multitude of different creatures," says Dougherty. "There are these creepy toys that come to life, so for them we used actual puppets and then used computers to erase the rods and wires and the puppeteers themselves. But then we would use digital for certain other creatures that I don't want to give away yet."

Krampus opens on 4 December.

SCI-FACT!

In 2017 Big Finish will go back to the start of the Time War with Eighth Doctor Paul McGann.



EVERYBODY HURTS

THIS MEANS WAR

John Hurt's War Doctor returns in audio drama **Only The Monstrous**

➔ **For all his temporal shenanigans,** the greatest trick Steven Moffat ever pulled was unearthing the War Doctor – a disgraced regeneration responsible for ending the Time War. A new four-volume audio drama, starting with *Only The Monstrous*, tells the story of the War Doctor in the thick of battle – something writer/director Nicholas Briggs and Big Finish have dreamed of doing since Hurt's scene-stealing turn in "The Day Of The Doctor".

"It's such a fantastic idea and I think we feel that we've had more of the War Doctor than we actually have," Briggs says. "My development of the War Doctor's character really feels like an organic thing, and I knew that John Hurt would bring his inimitable delivery and approach to it."

With both the Daleks and the Time Lords resorting to inhumane measures to avoid extinction, the series will naturally deal in

murky waters. "There's a Time Lord character played by Jacqueline Pearce called Cardinal Ollistra, and she really is the embodiment of the shades of grey in the whole Time Lord war effort," Briggs says. "Because of course war always throws up this appalling dilemma to which there is no answer – that in order to wage total war you end up abandoning the principles that you're allegedly fighting for."

But it turns out even the Doctor's darkest incarnation can be taken too far. "There are strict BBC guidelines about what we can and can't do with him," Briggs says. "Even though he is supposed to be steeped in blood and have committed some of the worst crimes of the Time War we obviously can't have him going around murdering people. But at the same time we have a responsibility to him being someone who has denied the identity of the Doctor." ●

Only The Monstrous is released on 10 December.

WRITE ON!

MURDER TO ORDER

In *Made To Kill* Adam Christopher pens Raymond Chandler's long-lost sci-fi novel

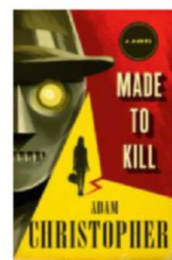


Adam Christopher's mashing different genres together.

➔ **Parodying it in a 1953 letter** "with a short vignette about rayguns, and pink pretzels and a computer called Google," Raymond Chandler was not a science fiction fan. A long time admirer of his crime novels, Adam Christopher wondered what it would be like if *The Big Sleep* author actually wrote a futuristic detective story, resulting in *Made To Kill*, which centres around Raymond Electromatic, the world's last robot-turned-private eye.

"I love retro sci-fi, and I love the golden age of American detective fiction, so I feel at home writing that kind of hardboiled, noirish period stuff," says Christopher. "So combining a Chandler-esque detective story with robots seemed like a natural fit."

The first instalment in The LA Trilogy, the novel takes place in an alternate mid-1960s America. "Ray works for a supercomputer called Ada but their operation is a relic of a now-defunct government programme to get robots working in the community," explains Christopher. "But thanks to a little reprogramming by Ada, he's now the world's first robot hitman, the PI thing being a handy cover. Ray's the muscle, while Ada is the brains, so she gets the jobs and tells Ray who to knock off." ●



Made To Kill is on sale now.

SCI-FACT! *Wireless* is shot entirely on GoPro cameras, often used for filming extreme sports.



Jacob Crow is a cop with an AI partner... but why have they chosen him?

CREATOR CHAT

ON THE GRID

Primeval's Andrew Lee Potts buddies up with a revolutionary AI in web series *Wireless*

➔ **Ever tried to strike up a** conversation with Siri? Then you'll know that artificial intelligence has a long way to go before the inevitable robot uprising. Web series *Wireless* has an evolutionary premise: what if a computer wasn't just whip smart, but could feel?

"It's interesting but it's scary as well because the whole idea of making [Unit White] feel emotion was – if you feel, theoretically you can love. And if you can love, you can hate and then it gets dangerous," Potts says. "We've got a lot to explore with that."

As well as directing, editing, colour grading and buying the sandwiches (one of those may not be true) Potts stars as Jacob Crow – a loose cannon cop back on the beat after a six-month suspension who gets partnered with

chatty AI Unit White. "They're testing it to see whether it would be a useful cop on the streets and it's about them surviving the day."

Potts originally developed *Wireless* as a traditional TV show with writer Alex Moss, but opted for the web series route to ensure their creation made it to the screen intact. This meant some changes: Unit White transformed from a robot into an AI (with the voice of *Primeval*'s Lucy Brown) which can transfer to any wireless-enabled device, and the first six episodes are set almost entirely in Jacob's car.

"We always knew that halfway through we were going to jump out of the car, but I wanted to solidify that relationship in a trapped environment," Potts explains. "I also wanted to surprise the audience who thought it was just going to be a cop in his car, because it's not."

"The big question is why on earth they've picked Jacob Crow. There is a reason for that which will transpire as the season goes on." ●

The first six episodes of Wireless are available to watch for free at wirelessweb.london.



AFTERLIFE CELEBRATING ICONIC SCI-FI STARS

110

LANCE GUEST

Alex Rogan in *The Last Starfighter*



Ah, '80s cult fantasy sci-fi cinema. A time for cheesy humour, groundbreaking-for-the-time FX and for your average teen to embark on heroic quests to restore equilibrium. In 1984's *The Last Starfighter* a gamer is recruited to fight for real in an intergalactic war. We spoke to original Starfighter Lance Guest.

Would you like to play the role again?

➔ Sure. I think Alex has a lot more he can do. It would be fun to see what his shortcomings in the first film might lead to. As well as his strengths.

What would Alex be doing now?

➔ Well, it's been over 30 years, if he's still alive, he must've taken care of all the necessary problems that were left with him in the original movie. If he's still working on them, there must have been some kind of setback.

Is there anything you think was unfinished about his story?

➔ Absolutely! What about [his girlfriend] Maggie? What happened when Xur took off?

Did you keep any souvenirs?

➔ A pair of Levi's and some Adidas. Much later someone gave me a pin that was on the Starfighter uniform.

Is there anything from the movie you wish was real?

➔ Maybe Centauri's starcar. It would be cool to just *drive* into space. I also like that if you shake a Beta's hand, he becomes a double!

What would it say on his gravestone?

➔ Victory or Death! Uh... I guess Death.

SCI-FACT! During hiatus in summer, Roiz and castmate Silas Weir Mitchell starred in a production of the play *Three Days Of Rain*.



FIVE MINUTES WITH...

SASHA ROIZ

Grimm's police captain on his recovery from season four, and season five's new threat

AFTER EFFECTS

“I hope to god Renard's recovered. Because that was a very painful season. To come back from the dead and then plagued by this demon entity that's taken over, and this Jack the Ripper character that came out, it really put me through the ringer. Our writers come up with some crafty things, and they always surprise us. I hope I don't have to face it again. But one never knows.”

MISSION STATEMENT

“This year is more about trying to help Nick recover from the tragedy of the the finale last year. He's going through so much, and he starts to unravel. He's got a lot of anger and a lot of vengeance on his mind, and confusion. So I'm trying to keep him glued [together] and also trying to keep the precinct running. But political ambition is always definitely on Renard's mind. So that will naturally present itself.”

THE FORCE AWAKENS

“We have this great sort of force that's going to envelop the world. It's going to be global, but the threat is in Portland as well. So all the characters will have to band together against this Wesen uprising that's going to see us through season five.”

DARK DREAMS

“I've been trying to persuade our writers to take Renard back to the darker side. I really liked him when he was more of an adversary to Nick, or when they were a little bit more at odds. I think it's really interesting to have that conflict with those two characters and to have less trust between them. It makes it a lot more fun for me to play. I think the fans are ready for that as well. He's been part of a gang for a little too long.”

Grimm's fifth season is currently airing on Watch.



SCI-FACT! Arthur C Clarke wrote Ricky Stormgren as the 60-year-old head of the United Nations.



WRITER EXCLUSIVE

PARADISE LOST

Life On Mars creator Matthew Graham swaps time travel for a benign alien invasion in *Childhood's End*

➔ Syfy's *Childhood's End* may feature an alien invasion, but don't expect Roland Emmerich-sized death and destruction. Based on the acclaimed 1953 novel by Arthur C Clarke, the six-hour miniseries finds a benevolent extraterrestrial race, dubbed "the Overlords", stepping in to help mankind achieve utopia. However, be careful what you wish for because there is a price.

"Apart from the initial sense of fear when they arrive, I didn't want to turn everything into global chaos," explains executive producer Matthew Graham. "There is a bit of panic, and a bit of the army mobilising, but we quickly dispense with that because we are overwhelmed by their power."

Under *The Dome*'s Mike Vogel plays Ricky Stormgren, a Missouri farmer who becomes the liaison between humans and the Overlords. The actor immediately gravitated towards some of the bigger themes explored in the script.

"In this world, you lose a lot of creativity and art and writing," says Vogel. "All those things have been spawned from pain, from adversity... In this world everything is hunky dory and everyone is almost the same. You see in the story there are those who have accepted utopia, and those who are bucking the system and going against it."

Graham's daunting goal was to capture the spirit of Clarke's classic. That meant keeping certain moments intact. "I'm really hoping a lot of people don't know what the Overlords look like," says Graham. "That's key to the

story and how we relate to them and why they hide themselves. I'm really keen to see what people think when Karellen (Charles Dance) finally comes out of the ship."

Childhood's End doesn't sugar coat Earth's fate. There's no happy ending, although for a fleeting second, Graham considered lightening things up. "Bill McGoldrick, who is our boss at Syfy, at one point, said to me, 'Are we actually going there?'" recalls Graham. "And I said, 'Yep. We have to go to that place. We will never be trusted again if we don't.'"

"Having just literally watched the final cut last night, I think we managed to find a balance," Graham concludes. "It is absolutely the ending of the book, but it doesn't feel devastating. It is not *Sophie's Choice* bleak. It's more of a poetic sadness. I hope we found the right balance and the audience doesn't feel too devastated." ●

Childhood's End premieres 14 December on Syfy US.

“DON'T QUOTE ME”

“ONE DAY I’LL JUST BE AN OVERWEIGHT HAS-BEEN, EJECTED FROM A DOCTOR WHO CONVENTION IN BOLTON FOR BEING DRUNK AND DISORDERLY.”

Peter Capaldi imagines a fate worse than death.



AERIAL ASSAULT SCI-FI TV ROUND UP

SHOWRUNNING

➔ Rejoice! **Black Mirror** is getting 12 new episodes on Netflix. **Zoo** and **From Dusk Till Dawn** also renewed.
➔ Lament! **Defiance**, **Extant**, **Dominion**, **The Whispers** and **Beauty And The Beast** all cancelled.
➔ Brace for disappointment! **Minority Report**'s first season cut to 10 episodes.

CASTING CALL

➔ Paul Reubens to reprise his *Batman Returns* role as the Penguin's dad in **Gotham**.
➔ Robert Knepper joins the cast of **Twin Peaks**.
➔ Powers Boothe to play Gideon Malick in **Agents of SHIELD**.
➔ Mark Hamill returning as the Trickster for **The Flash** season two.
➔ **Supergirl** adds Chris Vance as Kryptonian military officer Non.
➔ Dominic Cooper and Bridget Regan back for **Agent Carter** season two. **RoboCop**'s Kurtwood Smith also joins the cast.
➔ Sam Riley and Kate Bosworth headlining the BBC's adaptation of Len Deighton's novel **SS-GB**.

SCI-FACT! *Pride And Prejudice And Zombies* reunites *Game Of Thrones* stars Lena Headey and Charles Dance.

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES

OUT
12 FEB
2016

Jane Austen's novel of manners gets invaded by an army of the undead



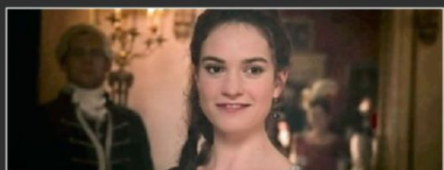
↑ Longbourn, England, the early 19th century, and my, don't the Bennets have a lovely manor?



↑ A manor where the likes of Matt Smith's insufferable vicar Mr Collins can attempt to woo Mr Bennet's five unmarried daughters.



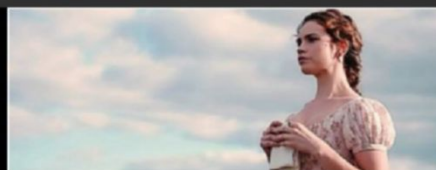
↑ Enter Mr Darcy (Sam Riley), an exceedingly wealthy landowner, but a man hard to like owing to his excessive pride.



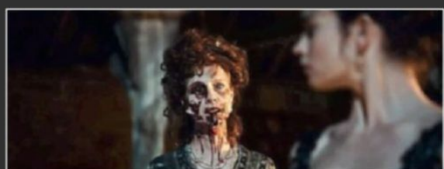
↑ Elizabeth Bennet (*Cinderella*'s Lily James), on the other hand, tends to judge people on first impressions. You know, prejudice.



↑ *Jupiter Ascending*'s Douglas Booth plays Charles Bingley, Mr Darcy's kindly acquaintance.



↑ It's a film about manners, morality and marriage among the landed gentry...



↑ ...until the "sorry stricken" zombies show up. Er, what?



↑ Based on Seth Grahame-Smith's satirical novel, the film casts the Bennet sisters as a team of ass-kicking zombie slayers.



↑ Elizabeth has been trained in martial arts to fight off the deceased ancestors of England (and bothersome suitors).



↑ Lena Headey goes into battle wielding dual katanas, and it looks like someone's popped her eye out of its socket!



↑ Despite the presence of zomboids, the characters have 19th century attitudes and consider carrying guns "unladylike".



↑ Expect those elegant white dresses to be covered in red stuff by the end of the film.

The Buzz



RICH The trailer's brief, but certainly delivers on every part of the *Pride, Prejudice and Zombies* equation. But can a clever title and a genre mish-mash sustain a whole movie...?



JORDAN Great trailer, I can imagine plenty of folks falling for it in the cinema, but I've little hope the joke will pay dividends beyond these 65 seconds. Looking forward to Matt Smith, though.



RUSSELL Kinda liked the rug-pull in this trailer, but can an amusingly jokey book title be turned into a satisfactory feature film? I suspect I may loathe this with a passion.



LAUREN Starting with a traditional depiction of Jane Austen's novel was pure genius; when the zombies do show up it's all the more entertaining. Cue kick-ass music, fights and blood and guts.

FLASH BASH

Cast and crew reunite for **Flash Gordon: 35th Anniversary Celebration**



It's been 35 years since Sam J Jones' saviour of the universe took on Ming the Merciless, and later this month, the cast and crew are reuniting at 195 Piccadilly, home of Bafta, to celebrate Alex Raymond's pulp hero. Ahead of the event we quizzed organiser and *Life After Flash* documentary maker Lisa Downs about what's in store.

How did this 35th anniversary celebration come about?

It started when I was emailing Sam Jones about the *Life After Flash* documentary. After seeing how he and Melody Anderson reminisced about the film over dinner I realised the chance to capture the cast and crew connecting again after 35 years could be really magical.

How much of a challenge has it been to put together?

It's a big challenge! People have thought this is a corporate event, with big companies behind it, but it is really just one fan putting it all together. With this, *Life After Flash* in the edit and holding down a full-time job my days don't have enough hours!

What can guests expect from the evening?

I want the evening to capture the magic and the excitement of when fans first saw it in the cinemas. The music, the atmosphere.... We will have original props and costumes, a Q&A after the screening where fans can ask questions and an afterparty where ticket holders can interact with the cast and crew, take photos, chat, and we will be offering some time for signings too.

Why do you think *Flash Gordon's* popularity has proved so enduring?

I think it has a lot to do with when you first see the film. Many fans we've encountered remember seeing it for the first time at eight or nine, and it transported them to this magical place, and that magic stayed with them. It's a film unlike any other, and there will never be another *Flash Gordon* again.

Flash Gordon: 35th Anniversary Celebration takes place on 28 November.



Yep, Gordon is still very much alive.

DATE
28 November

LOCATION
Bafta,
195 Piccadilly

DATE
20-21 February

LOCATION
ExCeL, London

PAGE TURNER

London Super Comic Con returns for its fifth year



Kraven and the Lizard joined by Green T-Shirt Man.



There are plenty of "comic" cons, but often comics are a small part of events dominated by film and TV. Not so at London Super Comic Con which puts the spotlight squarely on comic books and their creators.

Launched in 2012 with the mighty Stan Lee in attendance, LSCC is now in its fifth year, and already has a massive number of guests lined up including Howard Chaykin, Jill Thompson, Alex Maleev and John McCre. Expect more big-name guests to be announced in the New Year.

As in previous years, dealers from around the world will be on hand to sell their comic-related wares, major publishers will be in attendance offering sneak peeks of upcoming releases (and in some cases the chance to have your portfolio reviewed), there's a sizeable small-press section to meet the industry's future stars and, as you might expect, cosplay at every turn.

For more information visit www.londonsupercomicconvention.com.

COMING UP

HALI-CON

28 November
Get your face made up like a zombie and meet *Red Dwarf's* Hattie Hayridge at the inaugural Halifax-based convention. <http://bit.ly/halicon>

WALES COMIC CON

29 November
Sylvester McCoy, Mark Addy and half the cast of *The Hobbit* are among the guests at this year's dragon country con. <http://bit.ly/WalesCC>

YULEMOOT 2015

5 December
The Tolkien Society's annual get-together at The Old Contemptibles pub in Birmingham is free to attend and open to any Middle-earth enthusiasts. Grab a Barlman's Best! <http://bit.ly/Yulemoot>

PROP ART 2015

11-13 December
The City Screen Cinema in York plays host to this exhibition of film props and production artefacts, with special guests actress Caroline Munro and Darth Vader sculptor Brian Muir. <http://bit.ly/PropArt>

GEEK CENTRAL

13 December
Left your Christmas shopping till the last minute? There's still time to stock up on sci-fi-shaped merch ahead of Christmas Day at the Brighton-based geek fair. <http://bit.ly/GeekCentral>

STARFURY CONVENTIONS PRESENTS

THE WORLD'S ONLY 100% 'LOST GIRL' EVENT!

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- Autograph Sessions
- Photos with the Stars
- Cosplay
- Fancy Dress
- Themed Parties and more!...

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Rachel Skarsten
Rick Howland
K C Collins
Lena Rosella



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Richard Harmon

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11 to 13 March 2016 Renaissance Hotel Heathrow

MEET CAST FROM "ARROW", "AGENTS OF SHIELD",
"GOTHAM" AND "PEGGY CARTER"



FEATURING
Robin Lord Taylor
Manu Bennett
Paul Blackthorn
and more...

ULTIMATES

8-10 June 2016 Norbreck Castle Hotel Blackpool

INDEPENDENCE DAY RESURGENCE

That B-movie from back in the day is getting a follow-up...

I'M BAAAAAAACK

>Welcome to Earth. Again. Twenty years later the big flying saucers (with an unfortunate level of compatibility with Mac Powerbooks) are going to provide major shade over our cities once more. These are the reinforcements, answering the previous swarm's distress signal.

LET'S NUKE THE BASTARDS

Twenty years is a bit late for the cavalry to turn up, mind, and that's given humanity the chance to prepare for the next wave of buggy xenomorphs. The Earth has pulled together to form the multinational Earth Space Defense, led by the war of the world's gone-viral saviour David Levinson (Jeff Goldblum). Unfortunately for David, the aliens haven't exactly been sitting on their intergalactic-arsenal in the interim.

THEY'RE ALSO BACK

David Levinson's dad (Judd Hirsch) is also returning to the fray for more nebbish commentary while Bill Pullman is back as ex-President Thomas Whitmore. Even Brett Spiner is back as the awesomely haired Dr Brackish Okun and he *died* in the last movie...

HELL, NO!

But one big name is not returning for round two. Will Smith's cigar-chomping pilot Capt Steven Hiller has since heard the fat lady sing, leaving it to his son Dylan to do the fast-flying, faster-talking heroics. As played by Jessie Usher, Dylan'll be getting a weepy reminder of his old man from Vivica A Fox's returning ex-stripper Jasmine before heading out into battle.



NEW BLOOD

So who are the other new faces? Liam Hemsworth will go from zero to hero as Jake Morrison, a disgraced pilot exiled off to operate heavy machinery on Earth Space Defense's moon base. We'd put good money on the fact that this orphaned flying ace might just get the opportunity to redeem himself against the beasts that killed mum and dad the first time around.

REBUILDING THE WHITE HOUSE

Also putting the past behind her is President Whitmore's daughter, played by *It Follows*' Maika Monroe, trying to shrug off her famous family as part of the Secret Service team for the new president (Sela Ward). This POTUS has a much more aggressive attitude to the bugs from above and is more than ready to bring the ruckus.

MUST GO FASTER...

For people who can't wait for the glorious wholesale destruction of international landmarks, there's always Titan's prequel comic book. The as-yet-unnamed title – “a psychological prison drama” – will give an insight into how the shattered Earth rebuilt itself after the shenanigans of 1996.

WHEN TO EXPECT IT?

Independence Day: Resurgence blows up cinemas on 24 June 2016. ●

“DON'T QUOTE ME”

“NOW? I'D RATHER BREAK THIS GLASS AND SLASH MY WRISTS. NO, NOT AT THE MOMENT. NOT AT ALL.”

Something tells us Daniel Craig won't be back for *Bond 25*.



NEWS
WARP

HIGH-SPEED
FACTS

→ David Tennant and Catherine Tate reuniting for a set of three **Tenth Doctor Big Finish** audio dramas.

→ RIP *Twin Peaks*' Log Lady, and **Bruce Hyde** from the original *Star Trek*.

→ Future **Transformers** toys, comics and videogames to share a single “Prime Wars” storyline.

→ French court rules that Luc Besson's **Lockout** ripped off *Escape From New York*.

→ Sequels to Chuck Wendig's *Star Wars Aftermath*, **Life Debt** and **Empire's End**, due in summer 2016 and 2017 respectively.

→ JK Rowling's play **Harry Potter And The Cursed Child** has pulled a *Deathly Hallows* and will be staged in two parts.

→ Dark Horse publishing an **Avatar** comic book series featuring new tales.

→ Ta-Nehisi Coates to pen the newly relaunched **Black Panther** comic.

→ **Game Of Thrones** sets Emmy record with 12 wins in one year.



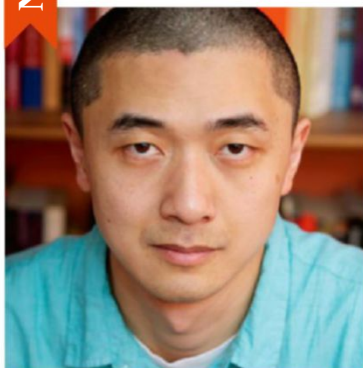
REX (C)

SCI-FACT! Noel Clarke's favourite old comics include *Action Comics* "when it was a few pages of this, and a few pages of that".

NEW AUTHOR

KEN LIU

THE HUGO AWARD-WINNING TRANSLATOR AND SHORT STORY SCRIBE ON HIS FIRST ORIGINAL NOVEL



What is *The Grace Of Kings* about?

→ It's a "silkpunk" epic fantasy – think "steampunk" but with the technology of East Asian antiquity. It tells the story of two unlikely friends, a bandit and a duke, who grow to be as close as brothers during the fight to overthrow an evil empire, only to find themselves on opposing sides of a struggle for the definition of a just society once the rebellion succeeds.

How did you go about world-building?

→ The world is inspired by the history and culture of East Asia and the seafaring cultures of the Pacific, but it is not a "magic China" story. I wanted to evoke the structure and narrative form of old Western epics like the *Iliad*, *Beowulf*, *La Chanson De Roland*, as well as the feel of Chinese *pingshu* and *wuxia* fantasies. As such, the world building required me to pay attention to history but not be bound by it, and to honour the source(s) without exoticising them.

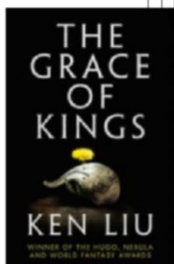
What was the hardest thing about moving from short stories to a novel?

→ The sheer number of facts that had to be kept straight. I had to keep a mini-Wikipedia for myself to track dates, historical events, myths, weapons, technologies and so on.

Which SF/fantasy authors would you like to be compared to in a dream review?

→ No one. All writers participate in a literary dialogue with all their predecessors. But no one wants to listen to a guy who can only imitate writers better than he. I prefer to be hated and loved for my own voice and style – I'm just that arrogant.

The Grace Of Kings is published by Head Of Zeus on 3 December.



CREATOR EXCLUSIVE

We're not sure what the little girl is holding, but we're not entirely comfortable with it.

X-NATION ARMY

Noel Clarke on his new comic *The Troop*

➔ **Growing up in a "rough place" in the late '70s and early '80s, comic books were often Noel Clarke's refuge from the world.** Now the filmmaker is penning his own superhero series for Titan Comics. Billed as "an edgy soap opera with violence and superheroes", *The Troop* appears to emulate the group dynamics of Chris Claremont's seminal *Uncanny X-Men* run, although according to the author any similarity is entirely unintentional.

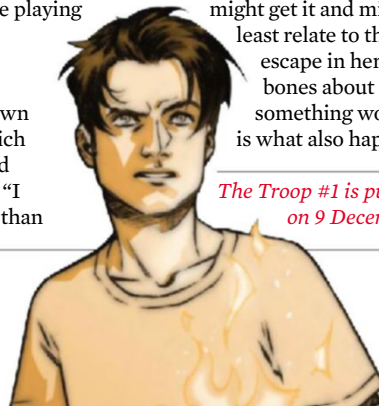
"With the *X-Men*, that's classic stuff and this is just me," Clarke says. "But isn't almost every comic a soap opera? It's a story. It has beats to hit, and hopefully it hits them but, within that, people have to relate to some of the characters." Having risen to prominence playing Mickey Smith in *Doctor Who*, Clarke has since mostly concentrated on writing, directing and starring in his own movies like *The Anomaly*, which should have stood him in good stead for scripting *The Troop*. "I found it tough at first; harder than

movies even," he admits. "I'm not saying my films are masterpieces but I tend to write decent dialogue and speeches."

Illustrated by Joshua Cassara, the five-parter is the first instalment of a proposed quartet of interlinked titles, which also includes the forthcoming *Girl 1*, which "is connected to *The Troop* quite strongly".

Made up of a 10-strong roster that includes its Australian leader Terrain and Brazilian triplets Jade, Trace and Element, Clarke's teenage protagonists tackle some important social issues, such as youngest member Virus's habitual self-harming. "When she does that and eventually stops, some girl somewhere might get it and might stop as well, or at least relate to that character and find an escape in her," he says. "But I make no bones about it, Virus might not and something worse might happen, which is what also happens in real life." ●

The Troop #1 is published by Titan Comics on 9 December.



Red Alert Image Bank

Jan 2016

Where we're going we don't need words*

SCI-FACT! Website Fandango calculated the cost of opening a real life Jurassic Park as \$23,432,400,000. Bargain.



UNIVERSAL APPEAL

Those talented so and sos at Dark Hall Mansion are regulars on the pages of Image Bank, and for obvious reasons. Their latest is a gorgeous seven-print series dedicated to classic Universal monsters, by artist Nicolas Delort, whose medium of choice is scratchboard. For more information head to darkhallmansion.com.

THE PRISONER(S)

Captain America turns 75 next year, and to mark the occasion Marvel are launching *Standoff: Assault On Pleasant Hill Alpha*, a crossover event featuring the All-New, All-Different Avengers. Pleasant Hill is a gated community full of secrets. Secrets the Avengers want to keep locked up, like Cap's ill-advised goth phase (note: this probably never happened). Issue 1 is on sale March 2016.



JURASSIC THAMES

Jurassic World was a monster hit in cinemas earlier this year, making a staggering \$1.6 billion at the box office. So naturally you wouldn't expect it to arrive on Blu-ray with a whimper. Enter this life-sized model Mosasaurus, which erupted through the ground at London's Southbank. That's what you get for leaving a scrumptious shark hanging around like that.

JURASSIC WORLD IS RELEASED ON DIGITAL HD, 3D BLU-RAY™, BLU-RAY™ AND DVD, COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL PICTURES (UK).



*NOT MANY ANYWAY.

SCI-FACT! *Tomb Raider's* Syrian tomb was based on Turkish structures the developers saw on a research trip.

LARA LEARNINGS

RAIDY DAYS

Lara Croft explores ancient mysteries in *Rise Of The Tomb Raider*

➔ **A tomb. Not a great place to be** visiting in real life, particularly if your companion's hinting you're about to be buried in it. But in videogames, we can't get enough of them. Since 1996's original *Tomb Raider* we've loved seeking out treasures, triggering deadly traps and only just escaping the horrors that lurk within.

Their absence was the only flaw of 2013's excellent reboot *Tomb Raider*. That game had great exploration, platforming, puzzles and combat... but where were our beloved tombs?

Brian Horton, game director on *Rise Of The Tomb Raider*, explains that tombs are back, and the scale has never been bigger. "Getting into them is interesting, solving them is more challenging, and just that journey of getting lost in a big exploration space and discovering them, it really has a nice feeling of reward."

Graphically it's outstanding, one of the Xbox One's best looking games. But the team have kept the spirit of what makes the series special. "In a *Tomb Raider* game, there's a point where you want to feel like you're getting a sense of discovery at a certain cadence," explains Horton. "So the Syria tomb was very well crafted to make the player feel that sense of discovery around most every corner. That was a big part of how we try to design our spaces."

From the explosive climax of the Syrian tomb that opens the game, to Siberian ice tombs that are just *begging* to be explored, *Rise Of The Tomb Raider* is looking like an explorer's paradise. Brian and his team have gone to great lengths to make this the most immersive *Tomb Raider* ever. "We really put you into the shoes of Lara Croft. You're discovering places that no one else has for maybe thousands of years, and have to use her smarts and wits to get through." ●

Rise Of The Tomb Raider is released on Xbox One and Xbox 360 on 10 November.

Lara Croft: raiding your tombs since 1996.

NEW SEASON EXCLUSIVE

NO COP OUT

Powers' second season goes back to beginnings

SPOILER WARNING!



Holding out for a hero?

➔ **After electing not to launch the** first series with it, the PlayStation Network's forthcoming second season of *Powers* will begin with the classic "Who Killed Retro Girl?" storyline that kicked off Brian Michael Bendis and Michael Avon Oeming's comic in 2000.

"This is allowing us to open up the world and the look of *Powers* in a way that we did not do last time around," teases Bendis, who is taking a more hands-on role while Remi Aubuchon is the sole showrunner after the departure of Charlie Huston. "Everyone is a suspect, including some interesting new cast members."

Among those who fall under suspicion is SuperShock. Played by Michael Madsen, the Superman-esque caped crusader is "one of the most powerful superheroes in the *Powers* universe." After vanishing several decades ago, he re-emerges and attempts to fill the vacuum left behind by Retro Girl's demise. "We've got some really powerhouse, iconic actors coming in," says Bendis, who is thrilled by Tricia Helfer's casting as FBI Special Agent Lange, who has some troubled history with Sharlto Copley's Detective Christian Walker. "She's been in the *Powers* comic since the first story arc, so I'm pretty excited about that!" ●

Powers season two will screen on the PlayStation Network in 2016.



Nick Setchfield's

DEVELOPMENT HELL

Your monthly glimpse into Hollywood's hoped-for future



HULK SMASH BROMANCE!

THOR: RAGNAROK

◆ In the immortal words of Tony Stark, we've got a Hulk. Yes, the third Thor movie is about to receive an injection of mean, green, gamma ray-riddled charisma. **Mark Ruffalo** has signed to play Bruce Banner – and his shirt-shredding, scene-stealing alter ego – alongside **Chris Hemsworth's** storm-wielding

Norse god, bringing a classic Marvel team-up vibe to the next slice of Asgardian adventure. We're told to expect a cosmic road movie in the Bob Hope/Bing Crosby tradition – if Bob Hope hurled an ancient mystical hammer and Bing Crosby smashed tanks. The title promises the end of days so the choice of director is unexpected: New Zealander **Taika Waititi** is best known for his work

on *Flight Of The Conchords*, and recently starred in and helmed the hilarious vampire mockumentary *What We Do In The Shadows*. So expect a light touch among all the Viking apocalypse. Filming begins in Australia next summer.

THE LATEST BUZZ!

ANT-MAN AND THE WASP

◆ Cue the tip montage! It's official – Marvel's microscopic crusader will return for a further bout of arthropodic action. And as the title tells us **Evangeline Lilly** will step up to share top billing as Hank Pym's partner-in-shrinkage Hope Van Dyne, finally winning a chance to wear the prototype Wasp suit teased in the final moments of the first film. What chance a sub-atomic dance

routine for the pair, Fred and Ginger style? The studio's clearly thrilled by the little fella's performance in the crucial new box office arena of China – *Ant-Man* recently became the second biggest Marvel release ever in that country, just pipped by *Guardians Of The Galaxy*. The sequel's targeting a 6 July 2018 release and **Peyton Reed** is in negotiations to return as director. What do you mean, you were expecting Edgar Wright?

ANGELIC UPSTART!

ALITA: BATTLE ANGEL

❖ We all assumed **James Cameron** would finally get around to helming this adaptation of the classic Japanese manga once he'd finished with the world of *Avatar*. Only now do we realise he will never be finished with the world of *Avatar*, exiled to Pandora like one of those potential Mars colonists forced to contemplate a one-way ticket to the red planet. So he's taking a step back to produce this tale of a 26th century female cyborg, letting *Sin City*'s **Robert Rodriguez** get on with the messy business of directing it. "We're already like two kids building a go-kart, just having fun riffing creatively and technically," says Cameron. "This project is near and dear to me, and there's nobody I trust more than Robert, with his technical virtuosity and rebel style, to take over the directing reins." Cameron continues to prep no less than three *Avatar* sequels, doubtlessly weeping into his beard as Earth recedes on the scanner screen.

REMAKE-FREE ZONE!

KONG: SKULL ISLAND

❖ Don't look for any biplane-swatting Empire State showdowns in the next King Kong movie. Star **Tom Hiddleston** has confirmed that the big ape's imminent big-screen comeback is no mere remake. "It's not set in the '30s," he tells *Variety*. "There's no movie director with a map. There's no out-of-work actress down on her luck. All of that stuff is respected, we're just trying to do



→ **Rebecca Ferguson** in the frame for Ridley Scott's

Alien: Paradise Lost... Creed helmer **Ryan Coogler** linked to Marvel's *Black Panther*... **Joe Cornish**, **Doug Liman** and **Shane Black** in contention to replace **Rupert Wyatt** as director of *Gambit*... *Kingsman* sequel locked for June 2017... **Ari Sandel** in talks to direct *Monster High*... New Line moving forward on *Annabelle* sequel... Lionsgate adapting graphic novel *Z-Men*... **Luther's Neil Cross** set to write *Escape From New York* remake for Twentieth Century Fox... **Steven Spielberg** says he'll "probably" do *Indiana Jones 5* with **Harrison Ford**... **Ron Perlman** joining Potter spin-off *Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them*... **James McAvoy** teaming with **M Night Shyamalan** on supernatural thriller *Split*... **Jeremy Irons** and **Brendan Gleeson** joining *Assassin's Creed*... Sony developing an animated *Ghostbusters* movie... **Matthew Vaughn** orbiting SF epic *Ascension*... Twentieth Century Fox adapting **RL Stine's Fear Street** books... **Ellen Page** in talks for *Flatliners* remake...



“Expect a lighter touch among all the Viking apocalypse”

something new with the myth because Kong is an icon of movies. I think he's someone people want to see again." Rumours of a funky '70s setting have been stoked by word that co-star **Samuel L Jackson** has recently been learning to pilot a vintage 'Nam era helicopter – though given his cosmic level of bad-ass cool that may simply be for shopping trips to Walmart. Warner Bros and Legendary Pictures have confirmed that ubermonkey shall clash with megalizard in 2020 monsterfest *Godzilla Vs Kong*, following *Godzilla 2* in 2018.

GO GO...

POWER RANGERS

❖ The colour-coded cast is coming together for Lionsgate's take on *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers*, Japan's spandex-heavy small screen export from the '90s. *Marco Polo*'s **Ludi Lin** will play the Black Ranger while **RJ Cyler** – recently seen in *Me And Earl And The Dying Girl* – gets to be Blue. Meanwhile *The Martian*'s **Naomi Scott** is the big-screen incarnation of the Pink Ranger, joining newcomer **Dacre Montgomery** as Red. We're still waiting to hear who'll complete the Zord-battling spectrum as the Yellow Ranger. Don't expect a reboot – the new movie is said to preserve the continuity of the franchise while providing a neat jumping on point for anyone unfamiliar with the original. Word is the new Rangers will tangle with villainous fave Scorpina, Rita Repulsa's shape-shifting minion in the old show. *Project Almanac*'s **Dean Israelite** directs, targeting a 13 January 2017 release.

WHAT DREAMS MAY COME!

SANDMAN

❖ **Neil Gaiman**'s Dream King remains bound for the big screen. Set to be directed by **Joseph Gordon-Levitt**, the project recently jumped from Warner Bros to sister studio New Line Cinema, officially home to the quirkier content of DC's Vertigo line. Now producer **David Goyer** reveals that another screenwriter is taking a crack at condensing the sprawling 75-issue saga of the Endless into a viable slice of multiplex entertainment. "We're just about to do a new draft," he tells *Collider*. "We're just starting a rewrite with a really fantastic writer... but I can't quite announce it yet." Goyer's confident that the movie will go into production next year. **Johnny Depp** – once a potential Sandman himself – will produce and star in another Gaiman adaptation, children's time travel tale *Fortunately, The Milk*, potentially to be directed by **Edgar Wright** from a script by *Flight Of The Conchords* star **Bret McKenzie**.

CAESAR THE DAY!

WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES

❖ Spot the tiny title tweak? What was once *War Of The Planet Of The Apes* is now *War For The Planet Of The Apes* – surely a tantalising hint that the next movie in the simian saga will see the ape hordes take on humanity in a savage, blood-drenched battle over irritatingly repetitive prepositions. *Jurassic World*'s **Judy Greer** is set to return as Cornelia, chimp bride of **Andy Serkis**'s Caesar, while **Karin Konoval** is back as Maurice, surely the greatest screen orangutan since King Louie. Or at least Cuddles the Monkey. *Diary Of A Wimpy Kid*'s **Steve Zahn** joins the cast as a new mo-cap primate while **Woody Harrelson** supplies the human villainy. **Matt Reeves** is back in the director's chair, working from a screenplay he co-wrote with *The Wolverine*'s Mark Bomback. The knuckle-dragging mayhem is unleashed 14 July 2017. ●



Illustration by Paul Cemicck

Worlds Of SFX

There's a whole universe to explore beyond this magazine

THIS MONTH ON
gamesradar+



Five things to look out for on our massive entertainment portal at gamesradar.com/sfx

- 1 The release of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* is so close we can almost taste it, but for now we'll just have to be satisfied with the final trailer. Here's our in-depth analysis of it: <http://bit.ly/forcetrail>
- 2 *The Walking Dead* has made a triumphant return to our screens so make sure you catch our fact-packed reviews of each episode. <http://bit.ly/dead2rev>
- 3 The GamesRadar+ team have picked their favourite horror movies of all time. From the ones you've seen (*The Thing*), to the ones you haven't (*Aftershock*), just grab some popcorn, a cushion to hide behind, and enjoy. <http://bit.ly/50horror>
- 4 *Back To The Future* Day might have come and gone but that hasn't stopped us obsessing about the franchise. We've got our hands on some exclusive set pictures and concept art! <http://bit.ly/futureextras>
- 5 When it comes to self-improvement, we're here to help. If you feel like you wouldn't be able to live through the opening of *Scream* right now, you need to improve your survival skills with our guide to surviving a horror movie. <http://bit.ly/horrorsurvival>



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TOTAL FILM



→ Justice is dawning: this issue *Total Film* gets the scoop on *Batman V Superman* from the likes of Henry Cavill, Ben Affleck, Gal Gadot and Jesse Eisenberg as the ultimate superhero showdown draws near. But that's far from all: *TF* also talks to the key cast about *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 2*, interrogates Chris Hemsworth about hunting whales, and cosies up with the cast of *Victor Frankenstein*. Plus: the finest reviews of the latest releases on screen and in the home. If your newsagent doesn't have it, there's no justice.
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COMIC HEROES



→ *Comic Heroes* has returned with its first issue since 2014 and a brand new look! Kicking things off is an in-depth guide to Marvel's All-New, All-Different relaunch. If DC is more your thing then we have a preview of the exciting new slate of Vertigo titles. Outside of the big two we look at how Image are ripping up the rulebook when it comes to contemporary comics, find out about Grant Morrison's bold reinvention of, er, Santa, and talk music and magic with *This Damned Band* author Paul Cornell. Plus news, reviews, Q&As and a whole lot more besides.
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//// SFX HAILING FREQUENCIES OPEN! ////

First Contact



THIS MONTH'S COMMUNICATIONS MONITOR

IAN BERRIMAN,
REVIEWS EDITOR



Not too surprisingly, *Doctor Who* was the main topic of

discussion this month, thanks to the news that Jenna Coleman's leaving, the announcement of a new spin-off, ratings doom and gloom, and howls of rage about the Sonic Sunglasses (psst: I think they're a bit naff too). But you don't just have to write in about *Who*, you know! Whatever SF&F issue is the bee in your bonnet, drop us a line – the email is sfx@futurenet.com. You'll feel so much better once you've got it off your chest.

SFX Hot Topic Your views on the month's big issue

#JENNA COLEMAN'S LEAVING DOCTOR WHO

🔗 **Candice Allen, Facebook** I've really loved Clara Oswald. She's smart, witty and not afraid of what's to come. I don't know why so many people dislike her – perhaps it's because she isn't a meek companion?

🔗 **Tim Pilcher, Twitter** Without a doubt the most annoying assistant since Mel and Ace.

🔗 **Daniel Langrish-Beard, email** To be honest I'm very happy Clara's leaving. She never really stayed on the TARDIS; never gave up everything to fly with the Doctor. I've never really felt like she gelled with the show.

🔗 **Kevin Hall, Facebook** I'll miss Jenna – she brought a bright and breezy approach to Clara and I loved how she one-upped the Doctor on more than one occasion. Hope she gets an emotional, tear-jerking two-part exit.

🔗 **Claire Rosemary Pugh, Facebook** What is there to like about Clara? She's vapid and has about as

much personality as a cucumber.

SFX You clearly haven't met my best friend, Clarence the cucumber. He's quite the card.

🔗 **Katherine Easton-Campbell, Facebook** I won't miss her. Jenna's a good actress but it needs to be the Doctor's show again.

🔗 **Bob Lee, Facebook** For too long now it's been all about the companion. It's called *Doctor Who*, not *The Adventures Of A Time-Travelling Companion*, Guest-Starring *The Doctor*!

SFX That'd probably be difficult to fit into a logo.

🔗 **TheHauntedGuy, GamesRadar+** If she'd died at the end of "Last Christmas", as was intended, (or just got old) I think it would have been the perfect ending.

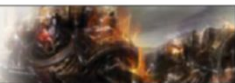
🔗 **Tony Bufton, Facebook** She's a teacher yet can walk into UNIT and get bossy – WTF?! We need a return to a non-human companion with no ties.

SFX How about Tom Baker's old idea of a talking cabbage? They can probably do that with CGI now...

🔗 **Emmet O'Brien, Facebook** Even though she's been here for two seasons I don't have a handle on any particular character there. She changes every

The Doctor's just gonna have to fight Vikings with someone else.





Get in touch!

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“ Jenna’s a good actress but it needs to be the Doctor’s show again ”

episode, and saying “... stuff” does not make her compelling.

Glenn Allen, Facebook Clara does my nut in. Apparently she’s smarter than the entirety of UNIT. She’s quite a horrible person when you think about her relationship with Danny, lying to him and leading her second life.

SFX Hey, it’s not exactly easy to tell someone you’re a time traveller. They’re likely to think you’re mad!

Ian Salisbury, Facebook For years people have wanted a more intelligent, proactive companion but when they get one they’re not happy.

MediumAtomicWeight, GamesRadar+ We’re on season nine and we still haven’t had a proper male companion. Jamie, Harry, Ben, Ian and Turlough have all shown how great a male presence in the TARDIS can be. Time for the ladies to move over and let the Doctor have a serious bromance!

SFX I’m all for a male companion... after the Doctor’s regenerated into a woman.



We want fresh cherry pie, do you hear us, fresh!

#CLASS WAR

The Llama God, email I think the idea of a new spin-off for Doctor Who is properly Class. Having been a big fan of *The Sarah Jane Adventures*, I think there’s room for a more yooof-oriented spin-off – especially given the rather dark and not-quite-kid-friendly turn that *Who*’s taken of late.

I’m not really bothered whether Clara appears in it or not – she’ll have had enough screen time by then. What I do demand is an appearance by the screen-canonised head of Coal Hill School’s board of Governors, ’60s companion Ian Chesterton. While I fully support the idea behind *Class*, if the series does at no point feature a cardiganed Chesterton punching aliens off the roof of the school, then this is one class I’ll be dropping out of.

Andrew Davies-Land, Facebook Just give us a Paul McGann miniseries and bring back Susan! Stop with the shifty spin-offs and convoluted ideas! No one wants to watch the twatty unlikeable kids of Coal Hill School fight monsters for eight weeks!

SFX Calm down Andrew. The *Sarah Jane Adventures* was a great show, and *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* – which this spin-off will probably be more

akin to – was never less than brilliant, so I’m looking forward to seeing what they do with *Class*. Shame about the underwhelming title, mind.

#LOOKING PEAKY

Priya Turner, email

I’m a bit worried about the new series of *Twin Peaks*. I’ve been watching Swedish drama *Jordskott*, which focuses on a small town of oddballs who have something creepy going on in their forest, and its themes keep reminding me of *Peaks*. Then there’s *Wayward Pines*, also about a town full of oddballs with something creepy going on. And *Grimm*, about a town with something creepy going on, and *Once Upon A Time*, and even things like *American Horror Story*... The weirdness that made *Peaks* such a success isn’t remarkable any more, so what will they do with the new series? Is there anything left to say, or did the show influence so many series that followed it that it’s rendered itself pointless?

SFX Quit fretting, Priya, it’ll be fine. David Lynch is a genius – he’ll find a way to turn things on their head. Maybe this time it’ll be an earnest, quirk-free straight drama? →

Look out for the next SFX Hot Topic at bit.ly/SFXHotTopic



So would Maisie Williams make a good companion? Eh, eh?



#LONELY ORPHAN

❖ **Keith Tudor, email** Why did the BBC treat the new series of *Orphan Black* so harshly, tucked away in the early hours of the morning at the weekend? How is that meant to attract any kind of audience? Is this the BBC hating the genre as silly and “for the geeks who’ve probably all downloaded it anyway” or is there another reason for this? I suppose we should be grateful it’s on at all.

❖ **Robert Graham, email** The BBC’s treatment of *Orphan Black* reminds me of the bad old days of the ’90s when they would hide any sci-fi content on BBC Two at 6pm because they were ashamed and embarrassed of the genre. A hit series, critically acclaimed, hidden away and rushed through as though they wanted rid of it as quickly as possible. Arriving in the UK with hardly any advertising meaning I nearly missed it doesn’t help either.

SFX Series three debuted on iPlayer, so the Beeb obviously felt they could tuck it away in the conventional schedules. But it’s so easy to miss things on iPlayer if they’re not flagged up in listings mags, and it’s a crying shame to think that people are unlikely to stumble across a good show like this by accident.

#BRASSED OFF

❖ **Jasmine Boyd, email** When will people stop describing any story involving a bit of brass or steam

power as “steampunk”? There’s a lot more to steampunk than that, and welding some brass onto a bog-standard fantasy or space opera isn’t enough. Where’s the sense of an alternate history? Where’s the technological plausibility? As a genre, it’s becoming debased even faster than urban fantasy was – and at least that’s got plenty of sex! **SFX Hear hear! Authors: quit just super-gluing cogs onto things!**

#WE ALSO HEARD FROM

❖ **Paul Hughes, Facebook** They can make as many *Transformers* films as they want. Don’t care. Won’t watch them. But by making *Pacific Rim 2* we are potentially missing out on other, better Guillermo del Toro projects. He owes us nothing, but I still selfishly hope that none of his precious time is wasted following up that movie. I’m still upset that *At The Mountains Of Madness* stalled!

SFX Just in case Michael Bay is reading, can I add: please DON’T make as many Transformers films as you want. We’ve suffered enough.

❖ **Ashley Beeching, email** Issue 266’s *Freespeak* with Pat Mills was a scintillating read. It’s heartening to read that the advancing years haven’t dulled his anger at the worlds of politics and entertainment one iota. I look forward to seeing what

“Why’s C5 waiting till next year to show *Gotham*? ”

institutions and dogmatic power structures he deems fit to rail against next in the pages of 2000 AD and beyond!

❖ **Andy Kinnear, Facebook** By turning down a cameo in *Ghostbusters*, Rick Moranis decided to stay out of what Michael J Fox describes in his book as “The Hollywood Bubble”. Fair play to him. He hopes it does well, but he is simply not interested. It makes a refreshing change from the limelight grabbers!

SFX Anything Rick Moranis does is alright by me – he’ll always be my role model and style guru. Which may explain why I’m single.

❖ **Nicki Sands, email** Why’s Channel 5 waiting until next year to show *Gotham*? There’s so much internet buzz about how great season two is. It seems perverse that a TV company wouldn’t want to capitalise on free pre-publicity. By January the show may have been cancelled (hopefully not) so they could be launching it amidst terrible publicity. You’d have thought showing it sooner would cut down on piracy too!

SFX I’m starting to detecting a theme here. TV schedulers: our readers all think you’re crackers!



James Gordon meets Channel 5 bosses?



Your sci-fi memorabilia valued by the experts from auctioneers Vectis

➔ Nigel Firth sent us a picture of his *Xenomorph* poster. “I’ve had an *Alien* (poster) in my attic for some years. It was produced at Scandecor in Germany. It is in good order, with only the corners showing its age. Could you put a valuation on my acid-spitting friend, as there is a hole forming in my bedroom ceiling as I write this ema...”



ADAM CARTER OF VECTIS SAYS:

“Unfortunately this particular poster is a reproduction and is ultimately worth very little, if anything. Scandecor are a well-known printer of licensed reproductions, and all those posters you see in your local supermarket or HMV are licensed reproductions. “Original posters are not sold in outlets like the aforementioned. If you want originals you need to look mainly online, but please make sure you buy from a reputable source.”

If you’ve got a piece of memorabilia you’d like us to feature, send us a photo of your item with a few words about what it means to you, to sfx@futurenet.com, using the subject line Cash In The AT-AT.

WIN!

A BB-8 DROID



To celebrate the release of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, we are giving readers the chance to win one of five BB-8 droids by Sphero.

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**GAMES
WORKSHOP**

DOCTOR STRANGE

Wishlist

WHAT YOU WANT TO SEE IN UPCOMING MOVIES AND TV

It's a kind of magic as Marvel's Sorcerer Supreme makes his big-screen debut

Illustration by Paul Garner

YOUR TOP 5 REQUESTS

HEY THERE, HOUSE OF IDEAS, OUR READERS HAVE GOT A WHOLE LOAD MORE IDEAS FOR YOUR UPCOMING BLOCKBUSTER...

EMBRACE THE MAGIC

1 The MCU has done a superb job mixing the mythical with far-fetched science, but **Jonathan Harvey** wants *Doctor Strange* to introduce the mystical side of Marvel comics to the big screen. "Fully embrace the world of magic, no half-hearted reliance on science."

OPEN DOORS

2 "I think one of the most important aspects is that it opens the door to the supernatural in the MCU," says **Lysander**. "With that, Marvel has justification to name-drop characters like Ghost Rider, Moon Knight, Daimon Hellstrom etc. Hell, characters like Captain Britain could make more sense since he is tied into Merlin and Avalon."

ORIGIN STORY

3 We may be intimately familiar with Spider-Man, Iron Man and Captain America's origins at this stage, but the origin story of Stephen Strange is significantly less well known, which is why **Gary Pratt** wants to

see it done right. "Have a brief origin story. According to Kevin Feige, Stephen Strange has one of the more interesting origins, so not being a big comic book fan I'd like to see this. Also no killing off the villain after one movie."

SMART SOLUTIONS

4 If *Doctor Who* has taught us anything it's that the Sonic Screwdriver can get its owner out of almost any predicament.

FlangeBadger doesn't want sci-fi's other famous Doctor to possess a similar get out of jail free card. "I'd like Dr Strange to use his mind as much as his magic. I'm not interested in seeing foes vanquished with a flick of the wand."

MINDLESS ONES

5 The Ancient One and Baron Mordo have already been confirmed as supporting players, but you'd also like to see Dormammu, Nightmare and a certain army of extra-dimensional faceless creatures. "Pant-wettingly terrifying Mindless Ones. The scarier the better," says **MediumAtomicWeight**.

ANCIENT ONE

Tilda Swinton

And that's not all they want...

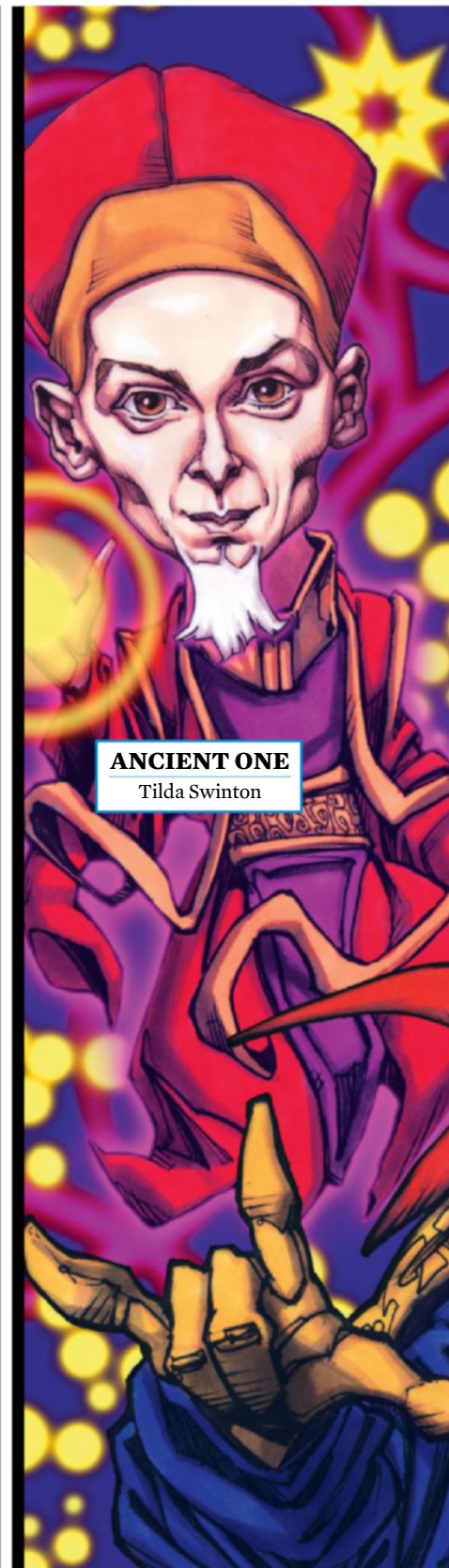
→ **Keith Heeney** Let's see some "hoary hosts of Hoggoth", he's always banging on about 'em! I think he's making it up, myself!
→ **Lee Burridge** Realistic demons.
→ **Colin Mottershead** The original costume by Steve Ditko recreated as faithfully as possible, complete with high collar.
→ **Faye Marsden** Wholeheartedly approve of the casting so far, and Mads Mikkelsen would make a great Dormammu.
→ **Frank Cotterill** More of the Quantum Realm, as seen in *Ant-Man*. Maybe we could find out what happened to Janet van Dyne in there.
→ **Ella Easom** A different feel to every Marvel movie so far. The

"formula" is starting to lose its appeal for me.

→ **Bob Holmes** A nod to Doctor Strange's costume change in 1968 (and how rubbish it was).
→ **Mary Dennell** If they're doing the traditional origin story make it as personal as possible - don't tie it into an end of the world plot.
→ **Joe Cowden** The Sanctum Sanctorum in all its mystical glory.
→ **Carl Lewin** An explanation for why Hydra considers him a threat in *The Winter Soldier*.
→ **Adelaide Wescott** Have Wong but make him more of a Kato-like ass-kicking assistant than a servant.
→ **Trevor Langley** Anyone other than Benedict Cumberbatch as Strange - he's a boring, obvious

choice. Take more risks, Marvel!

→ **Nick Munson** None of this axe nonsense that Strange has in the new Marvel comics.
→ **Elaine Baker** At least one scene where Strange makes a coin appear from behind a child's ear or does the old detaching thumb trick.
→ **Ken Edwards** A Stan Lee cameo as a hokey magician who saws a woman in half on stage.
→ **Ali Everett** A big old scrap with Nightmare in the dream dimension.
→ **Rob Seymour** MCU crossovers, references and cameos kept to a minimum, like *Guardians Of The Galaxy*. If Doctor Strange is to succeed the character needs to stand on his own before teaming up with Cap et al.



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TALES OF WAR FROM THE GRIM
DARKNESS OF THE FAR FUTURE

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First Contact Jan 2016

YOUR DREAM CAST

DORMAMMU

Mads Mikkelsen

BARON MORDO

Chiwetel Ejiofor

CLEA

Rachel McAdams

DOCTOR STRANGE

Benedict Cumberbatch

COMING SOON
**20,000 LEAGUES
UNDER THE SEA
AND ALIEN 5**

Bryan Singer goes deep sea diving, and in two issues time we ask what you want from Neill Blomkamp's xeno sequel.

See bit.ly/SFXwishlist for details.

ADRIFT ON THE SEA OF RAINS

by Ian Sales, 2012

Dave Hutchinson celebrates the start of a memorable space mission



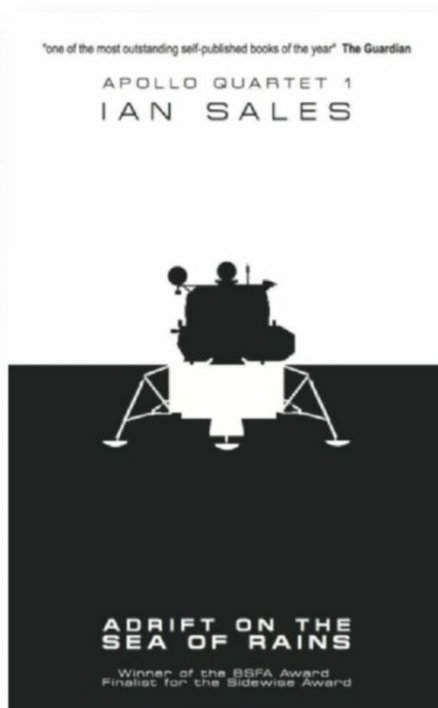
Marooned in a top-secret base on the Moon, a group of US military astronauts wait for their inevitable death after nuclear war renders the Earth uninhabitable.

That's the nutshell of Ian Sales's novella *Adrift On The Sea Of Rains*, but this fabulous little book literally contains worlds. I bought a copy at EasterCon in 2012, having never read any of Sales's previous work, and read it a couple of times while I was still there. I've read it several times since, and I still can't find a thing wrong with it. It's genuinely marvellous.

The main action of the story takes place in an alternate 1970s where NASA has been overtaken by the military and space has been weaponised. The Cold War has become hot and the crew of Falcon Base now have nothing to do but gaze up at their ruined home planet and wait for their supplies to run out. Except there may be a way to escape...

It's a wonderfully *rigorous* story, the hardest of hard science fiction, science fiction that smells of sweat, science fiction with fuel-to-weight ratios and delta-vee calculations. I've never read anything that quite captures the sheer insane *danger* of space travel like this novella, and it was with great pleasure that I learned it had won the 2013 BSFA Award for short fiction.

But Sales is gunning for far bigger game here. *Adrift...* is the first part of his Apollo Quartet, a series of three novellas and one novel. The second novella, *The Eye With Which The Universe Beholds Itself* – the title is from Shelley's "Hymn Of Apollo" – alternates its attention between the first manned mission to Mars, and another mission, 15 years later, to



discover why a scientific mission orbiting a world of the star Gliese 876 has fallen silent.

The third novella, *Then Will The Great Ocean Wash Deep Above*, mixes an alternate-world take on the story of the Mercury 13 – a group of women astronaut trainees who became part of an independently-funded programme and underwent some of the same physiological screening tests as the male astronauts selected for the Mercury programme in 1959 – and a descent of the bathyscaphe Trieste II to a

depth of 20,000 feet in the Atlantic Ocean to recover film from a lost spy satellite.

But it's with the final part of the Quartet, the novel *All That Outer Space Allows*, that we see the genius of Sales's vision. It tells the story of Ginny Eckhart, whose husband Walden is a USAF test pilot in the high desert of California in the '60s. Except this is not quite the world we live in. Ginny Eckhart writes science fiction, but in this alternate universe science fiction is dismissed as "women's fiction", written for and mostly by women.

Sales tips the world – the one science fiction fans know, at any rate – on its head, nesting realities within each other, forcing us to look at the rest of the Quartet quite differently, with hints that Ginny actually wrote her versions of the previous novellas.

I've only really scratched the surface of this wonderful piece of work. The Apollo Quartet is rich, deep, audacious, incredibly well-researched, thought-provoking, and some of the best science fiction I've ever read, raising gender issues in a way I haven't seen before in the genre. It's not *easy* science fiction – Sales is a writer of extraordinary skill and he makes the reader work for their pleasures. I hope that one day soon the Quartet will be recognised for the genuinely significant achievement that it is. Go out and read it. ●

Dave Hutchinson's Europe At Midnight is out now from Solaris.

Like this? Try these!

THE FOUNTAINS OF PARADISE by ARTHUR C CLARKE (1979)

→ The story of the building of a "space elevator" to carry people and freight into low Earth orbit, this is Clarke at his very best.



ACCELERANDO by CHARLES STROSS (2005)

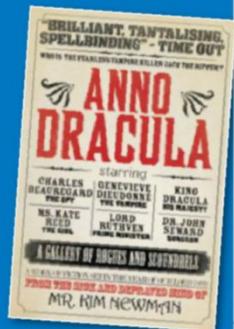
→ A different kind of hard science fiction, nine linked short stories charting mankind's ascent to posthumanity. It's a wild ride, smart, thought-provoking and entertaining.



NEXT ISSUE ↓

In SFX 269 (on sale 9 December), *Fighting Fantasy* and *Pax Britannia* writer Jonathan Green looks back at what the king of the vampires did next, with Kim Newman's *Anno Dracula* (1992).

If you're not familiar with the novel, why not check it out before reading what a top author has to say about it?





WAR OF THE WORLDS

COMING IN NOVEMBER

On one terrible night in August 1895, the world changed forever. Grey metal cylinders, launched from Mars, came crashing down in southern England. The next 15 days were marked by courage and despair, hope and shock, defeat and fleeting victory as Queen Victoria's army struggled to contain the terrible alien threat. The war, man against machines from space, was fought without mercy on either side. And the outcome would be decided by the smallest of things...

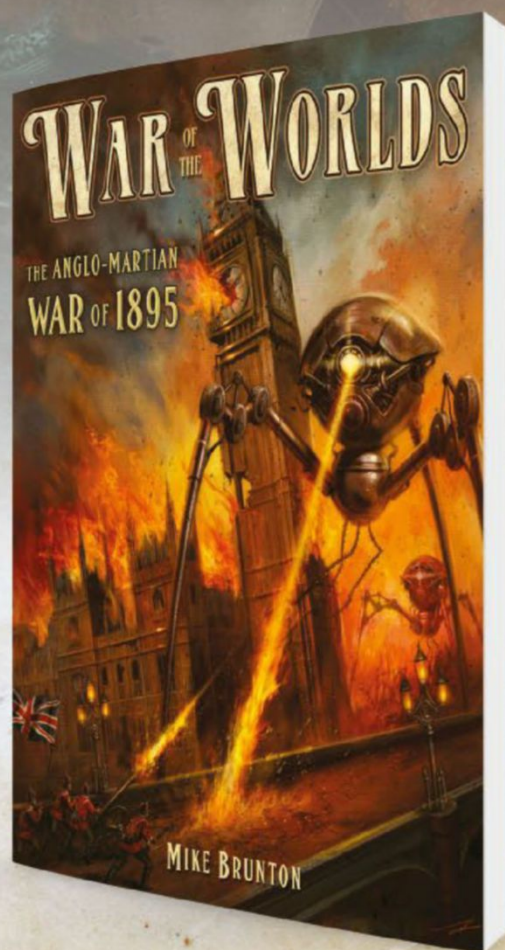
This book covers the whole of the Anglo-Martian conflict, beginning with a look at the relative strengths and weakness of the two armies, both British and alien, and comparing the different strategies employed. It then takes a detailed look at the actual military struggle, covering all of the major engagements between the tripods and Victoria's army.

ISBN: 978 1 4728 1156 1

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DOUBLE TAKES

David Langford enjoys some literary faux pas



**“TOO MANY
COPY EDITORS
FELL PREY
TO THE DARK
SIDE OF
DOWNSIZING”**

→ Illustration by Andy Watt

A long time ago in a publishing industry far, far away, magically gifted Jedi known as copy editors would often save authors from serious prose embarrassment. Alas, too many copy editors fell prey to the Dark Side of Downsizing, and writers now need to take more care. Or their favourite sentences are showcased in my newsletter...

Can you imagine these noises? “He walked in and heard a sound like a tomb.” (Lee Child, *Tripwire*.) “An eerie soundless shriek of terror ripped from the convulsed shroud.” (Terry Brooks, *The Sword Of Shannara*.) “The sound of Eddie’s voice had been an injection through the ear.” (William McIlvanney, *The Papers Of Tony Veitch*.) “...a noise so soft and invisible it wouldn’t mean anything unless you knew what it was.” (John Burnham Schwartz, *Reservation Road*.)

Did these chaps consult a dictionary? “Luckily, the wall beside me was irregular with protuberances, and I was able to pack myself into one of them.” (Hugh B Cave, “The Door Of Doom”.) “Rugolo glanced at the greenness carpeting the plain, which he had taken to be a variety of grass or moss, forms of verbiage common on many worlds...” (Barrington J Bayley, *Eye Of Terror*.)

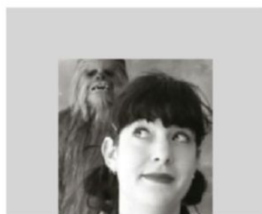
How many people can do these tricks? “Under his beard, Torin frowned.” (Keith RA DeCandido, *Dragon Precinct*.) “Arcadia’s head moved sharply back of itself.” (Isaac Asimov, *Second Foundation*.) “...slowly a crimson flush spread around his ears. Eventually his earlobes, unusually large and awkward, were illuminated like traffic lights.” (Anne Holt, *Death Of The Demon*.) “A hand took his, pressed it firmly, looked him straight in the eye.” (Neil Gaiman, *American Gods*.) “He rose to his spare elbows.” (Charles E Gannon, *Fire With Fire*.)

Know any pets like this? “Like a cat scenting an approaching storm, she had left with a pair of suitcases ...” (Chris Fowler, *Soho Black*.) “His ginger hair with its generous dashes of grey sat on his head like an electrified cat.” (JD Robb, *Strangers In Death*.) From *Miss Manners’ Book Of Extreme Etiquette*: “But one does not scream with a beer barrel tap inserted deep into one’s jugular vein...” (Jack Oleck, *The Vault Of Horror*.) One certainly does not. One has standards. Whose eyes can do these tricks? “Dorothy’s eyes were turned inward to her long-buried memories.” (Debra Ginsberg, *The Neighbors Are Watching*.) “The eyes follow me down the street, pinching the back of my neck.” (Veronica Roth, *Insurgent*.)

Cruel and unusual punishment? “If they were captured wearing the enemy’s uniform, they would probably be tortured to death before being shot.” (Giuseppe Filotto, “Red Space”.) Powerfully evocative similes and metaphors? “They stared at me, squinting as if I were holding a supernova.” (Catherine Asaro, *Undercity*.) “...a face pink and stern as frozen strawberry custard.” (Ayn Rand, *Ideal*.)

What would doctors make of these symptoms? “Not for the first time, a cold fist appeared deep within her stomach.” (Becky Chambers, *The Long Way To A Small, Angry Planet*.) “His brain began to sway on its base, as the landslide of possibilities unreeled before it.” (AE van Vogt, “Juggernaut”.) Without comment: “Connie had a wry, compact intelligence, a firm little clitoris of discernment and sensitivity ...” (Jonathan Franzen, *Freedom*.) “Daniel sat back, steeping his long fingers across his waistcoat. He bought them from a little shop in Brixton Market.” (Paul McAuley, *Something Coming Through*.) Enough, enough! ●

David Langford is, as usual, fleeing a mob of outraged authors.



HERE BE DRAGONS

...and Dungeons, as **Bonnie Burton** explains her love of the RPG



“I CAME AWAY
FROM D&D
WITH FRIENDS
I COULD ASK
FOR REAL
LIFE ADVICE”

→ Illustration by Maria Colino

Ever wish you had a magical spell to mute loud strangers? Or does drinking too much mead in a rowdy tavern suit your idea of the perfect night? Then again, looting a secret treasure room in an abandoned castle sounds like fun too.

Luckily, you can experience all of these things and more if you delve into a game of Dungeons & Dragons with your friends. Some of you reading this understand completely the lure of this iconic role-playing game, originally created in 1974. While others may be rolling their eyes thinking, “Ugh, nerd stuff.”

Don’t be too quick to dismiss the idea of sitting around a table with other players pretending to be an elf, troll, ogre, wizard, knight, witch or vampire for hours on end as “too geeky”. You don’t have to dress up as your character’s race or species. There’s no pressure to be an expert in elf lore or dragon anatomy. And the skills you learn while playing this game will last a lifetime.

When I stumbled upon my first Dungeons & Dragons game, I was a shy 12-year-old geek without a posse. I felt alone in my love for *The Lord Of The Rings*, *Star Wars*, *Doctor Who* and *Red Dwarf*. And living in a small town where sports ruled didn’t help. I couldn’t have a conversation with any kids without someone saying, “You’re so weird.”

So when I came across a group of older kids yelling about throwing fireballs at a mob of deadly druids, I stopped in my tracks and asked them if I could watch them play their mysterious game. As a budding writer, I loved the storyteller aspects of the game. Each player can customise his or her character’s look, powers, language skills, personality quirks, strengths, weaknesses, complicated family history and love life. If you have the honour of being the Dungeon Master (DM) for a campaign, you get to decide what the quest or adventure will be for the players.

I love D&D because it not only taught me how to let my freak flag fly, but it showed me that being different from everyone else can make you feel like a superhero instead of a super loser. Thanks to D&D, I found myself often figuring out more creative ways to trick bullies and mean girls out of fighting me. When confronted with a kid who kept pushing me around physically, I convinced him I had a weird contagious skin disease. I applied my newly-found D&D skills for creating an imaginary ailment that put a stop to shoving me into lockers.

D&D campaigns are also about the importance of teamwork. When you are alone, everything feels like an impossible obstacle. But when you join up with a group of people with different talents who all have the same goal in their sights, any challenge can be overcome. In real life, understanding the fundamentals of teamwork is essential in the workplace. I also came away from D&D with a new set of friends I could rely on not just to battle orcs in our games, but people I could ask for real life advice on everything from first dates to career choices.

I highly recommend D&D for both kids and adults. Parents might find D&D daunting at first, but once you get the hang of creating a campaign family game night will never be the same again. When you teach yourself and others how to use your imagination when surrounded by angry villagers or when you’re trapped in a sinking pirate ship, you learn how to apply creative thinking to the real world. And that kind of gaming is priceless. ●

Bonnie realises that when facing danger, using brains over brawn is crucial.



Penny Dreadful

SFX's high priestess of horror

SAFE HOUSE

➤ **Crimson Peak** looks beautiful but it's not scary – disappointing for me but for some strangely comforting. There's something in this. Horror is a sprawling creature, good for all kinds of ills (this is why I don't believe people who say they don't like horror...) and there's a place for tantalising gothic gorgeousness that's not going to upset the horses. For those who wish to feast their eyes without jangling their nerves, here are three more visually stunning non-scary scarers. 1) **Acacia** South Korean horror melodrama about a couple who adopt a boy who becomes obsessed with the flowering tree in their garden – florid with images of nature and death (and red wool). 2) **The Cell** Tarsem Singh directs Jennifer Lopez as a social worker who enters the mind of a psychopath – inside it's full of the strangest, most sweeping setpieces imaginable – mental and experimental. 3) **Les Yeux Sans Visage** A bit creepy but after its gruesome denouement descends into fairytale with a faceless woman wandering the woods with doves on her arms like a messed-up Snow White. Lovely.

BEYOND THE FEST

➤ Last month genre overlords FrightFest launched their own label FrightFest Presents – beginning with a collection of six films which screened at the festival in August, available to download now. The first set includes **The Sand** (man-eating-beach movie. Really), **Estranged** (messed-up family shocker), **After Death** (afterlife nightmare), **Night Of The Living Deb** (zomromcom) **Some Kind Of Hate** (rape-revenger) and **Aaaaaaaah!** (pukey nonsense). The best of the fest? Hardly, but that's not the point – this marks a new era for FF, opening up its crop to those who can't make the event, giving a new outlet for indie filmmakers and a greater incentive to seek a place in the festival line-up in the first place. The ideal is this: that FrightFest Presents becomes an absolute seal of quality, meaning the casual horror nut doesn't have to trawl through acres of dross like **Toolbox Murders 2** or **A Haunting At Preston Castle** (guess what I've been watching this month...) and can jump straight to the quality curios. Don't let us down, FrightFest!

On beauty, and the beasts, as well as an exciting new horror label



Some Kind Of Hate means needing a good launderette.

Les Yeux Sans Visage still have it.

After Death doesn't mean the end, you know.

JUMP CUTS

➤ Commissioned exclusively for iPlayer, **Fear Itself** is a semi-documentary consisting of clips of classic horror movies accompanied by a fictional narrative voiceover exploring the nature of fear. More art-installation than original feature in its own right, it's nonetheless experimental and interesting. It's too long at an hour and a half. The pace and tone of the voiceover barely varies (but then this gives it a certain "lullaby" quality) and the mix of a vague narrative with critical discussion doesn't always gel. But there's undeniably something mesmerising and unsettling about it, as it picks apart our relationship and complicity with the movies that scare us, while showing us the very scenes – new or familiar – that evoke those feelings. It's available on iPlayer for a year.

MONSTERS, INC

➤ It's been announced that following **Kong** reboot **Skull Island** and **Godzilla 2**, the two behemoths are due to meet in **Godzilla Vs King Kong** in 2020. Can't wait that long? Then watch out for **Colossal** from TimeCrimes director Nacho Vigalondo. Notwithstanding a lawsuit from original 'Zilla makers Toho, Vigalondo's latest will see Anne Hathaway discover a strange connection between her and a giant lizard attacking Tokyo. There may also be a robot. Described as **Godzilla** meets **Lost In Translation**, we can't wait for the bit where the Hath and gods do some bonding karaoke and the nuanced ending where the scaly titan bends down to whisper a silent and enigmatic "rah!" in Anne's ear right at the end.... ●

Dreadful things to do

➤ Indulge your practical "make and do" side while maintaining your essential freaky horror nut essence with fab new book **Paper Dandy's Horrorgami** by Marc Hagan-Guirey (out now). Make pop-up versions of 20 gruesome scenes from **Dracula's Castle** to **Frankenstein's Laboratory** to **Skull Island**. Crafty!

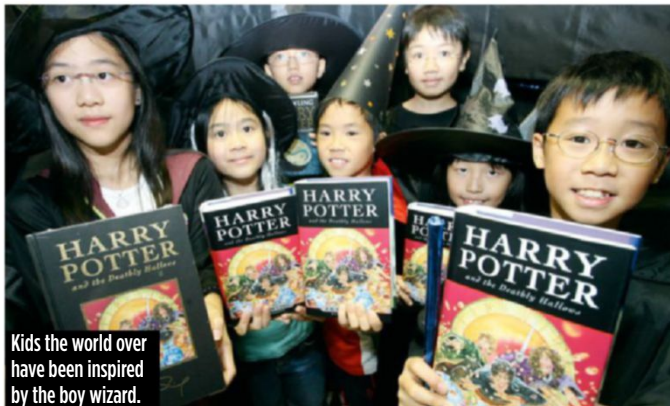




FREESPEAK

WHERE WRITERS AND OPINIONS COLLIDE

Author **Brandon Sanderson** applauds fantasy for the masses



Kids the world over have been inspired by the boy wizard.

I've been thinking lately about Sejong the Great, king of Korea in the 1400s, and his relationship to science fiction fandom. Sejong is credited with creating the hangul writing system, the Korean alphabet. Before that, people in Korea relied on Chinese, which was difficult to learn – particularly for commoners.

Hangul is now considered a great linguistic triumph that has made Korea one of the most literate societies on the planet. You can learn hangul in about an hour, and it optionally interfaces with Chinese characters in a framework of hangul characters for grammar.

But when Sejong presented hangul to his court, they claimed it was a waste of time. Knowledge of Chinese was required to take the Confucian placement tests for government service, and those who passed were respected and powerful. Hangul put reading within the grasp of common people – which just wouldn't do.

Today, I worry about how we treat people who become fans of science fiction through the "wrong" methods. It's hip to hate *Twilight* or *Eragon* – whatever popular fiction is introducing young people to reading these days

– never mind how important and life-changing these works have been to many. I've even found myself put off by those who came to Tolkien or comic book characters because of films – while I loved them way back when.

This elitism is akin to how those Confucian scholars resisted the advance of hangul. Why look down on fiction or films that people love? Shouldn't we be happy and excited that so many people are discovering what we have loved for so long?

I spent years in academia being judged harshly for loving fantasy books, and for daring to write "that crap". I hate to see this in our community. You don't have to like everything that comes out, and you can certainly criticise books as works of literature – but can't we turn our attention away from shaming the fans, and toward something more productive?

I mean, we have important things to talk about. We haven't even come to a consensus on which *Star Trek* captain is the best! (Hint: it's Sisko.) ●

*Brandon Sanderson's latest book, **Firefight: A Reckoners Novel**, is published on 12 November.*

GETTY (1)

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You realise without language we'd be nowhere, right? So here are lotsa words: All contents copyright © 2015 Future Publishing Limited or published under licence. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be reproduced, stored, transmitted or used in any way without the prior written permission of the publisher. Future Publishing Limited (company number 2008885) is registered in England and Wales. Registered office: Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA. All information contained in this publication is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Future cannot accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in such information. You are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the price and other details of products or services referred to in this publication. Apps and websites mentioned in this publication are not under our control. We are not responsible for their contents or any changes or updates to them. If you submit unsolicited material to us, you automatically grant Future a licence to publish your submission in whole or in part in all editions of the magazine, including licensed editions worldwide and in any physical or digital format throughout the world. Any material you submit is sent at your risk and, although every care is taken, neither Future nor its employees, agents or subcontractors shall be liable for loss or damage.



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"I'm not pointing, I'm showing you the end of my finger!"

Sound Advice

Use the Force
(and Bluetooth)
to power these top
Star Wars speakers



With the trusty hi-fi going the way of the dodo, boom boxes a relic equivalent to the mummified remains of King Tut and all your music stuck on a device that can't easily be plugged into anything built before 2005, playing tunes round the house usually means resorting to tinny laptop speakers. Or worse, TV channels that play music so alien it may as well be broadcast on a soundwave that can only be heard by people with a YouTube channel. Bluetooth speakers are the handy, wireless way to stream music from your phone, tablet or other Bluetooth-enabled, music-hosting device. But who wants a characterless black cube sitting in the corner of the room pumping out the *Star Wars* soundtrack? John Williams' timeless orchestrations deserve so much better. That's where AC Worldwide's officially licensed *Star Wars* Bluetooth speakers, available to pre-order now, come in.

The two models – one based on a Stormtrooper helmet, the other based on C-3PO's golden dome – hook up to any Bluetooth-enabled doodad to play music, audiobooks, recordings of yourself impersonating Threepio or any other sound files you care to transmit through thin air. You don't even need to be trained in the arts of an ancient religion to pull it off, it only takes

AVAILABLE
TO PRE-ORDER
NOW!

a few button presses. Offering premium 2.1 sound, the 30cm tall speakers can be plugged in at the mains or powered by an internal rechargeable battery for maximum portability. Better yet, you can conduct phone calls through them, spicing up conversations with friends/family members/nuisance PPI robots by having their disembodied voice emerge from Threepio's mouth, or a crack-shot Imperial grunt (hey, there's got to be one). Bonus points if you can convince the person

on the other end into saying "I've got a bad feeling about this."

As well as a nifty bit of top of the range tech, the *Star Wars* Bluetooth speakers are also a lovingly crafted collector's item, comparable in build, quality and design to lavish replicas. Both Threepio's head and the Stormtrooper hero helmet are exact replicas of the films' original designs. The makers even used the original specs to ensure that every detail, down to vents and grills on the side of the





Stormtrooper helmet, is present and correct. In short they're *stunning*. As if that weren't enough, they utter lines of dialogue from the films when switched on, and the eyes light up when connecting to a Bluetooth device.

Even the boxes they come in are lovely – classy matte black packaging complete with a cleaning cloth for keeping Threepio's spotless shine intact when he doesn't have R2-D2 around to help him. The *Star Wars* Bluetooth speakers cost £129 each and are available to

pre-order now. Like music? Love *Star Wars*? You won't find a better festive gift.

AC Worldwide won't be leaving it there, either – they're working on a set of speakers based around one of the biggest gaming franchises of all time. Keep your eyes (and ears) open for details... ●

The C-3PO and Stormtrooper speakers are available to pre-order now from www.acworldwide.cool and from Amazon.

REBEL RADIO

Five top tracks from a galaxy far, far away to stream through the *Star Wars* Bluetooth speakers

1 THE ASTEROID FIELD

👉 This gorgeous arrangement is one of John Williams' crowning achievements. Less iconic than the main theme and the Imperial March, perhaps, but the lilting music that accompanies the scenes where the Millennium Falcon sweeps through a seemingly unnavigable asteroid field causes our spirits to soar every time we hear it.

2 DUEL OF THE FATES

👉 The prequels were disappointing, but made worthwhile almost singlehandedly by *Episode I*'s climactic lightsaber battle and the extraordinary music underscoring it. The use of Sanskrit chants throughout gives the track a very different feel to anything else in the saga, but there are few *Star Wars* songs more dramatic and pulse-quickening – a perfect mirror to the blistering action on screen.

3 IMPERIAL MARCH

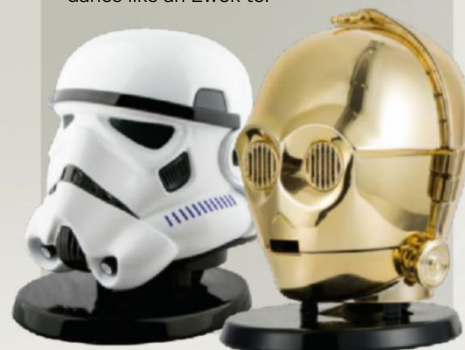
👉 Want to feel like a complete badass when walking into your own living room? Darth Vader's menacing theme is the perfect choice. Just don't get carried away and try to force-choke the cat when it's playing.

4 THE THRONE ROOM

👉 On the other hand, if you want to feel like an insta-hero pop on the final track from *A New Hope* and swell with the pride of someone who's just blown up a planet-obliterating battlestation. It's the perfect accompaniment for those moments of everyday heroism, such as taking out the bins or making a particularly delicious dinner.

5 VICTORY CELEBRATION

👉 A fierce debate raged recently in the *SFX* office over which was superior – the original Yub Nub tune that ended *Return Of The Jedi* or the "Victory Celebration" that ends the Special Edition. Clearly it's the latter (though not everyone agrees), and it's great to dance like an Ewok to.







THERE HAS BEEN AN AWAKENING...

As we prepare to return to a galaxy far, far away, Richard Edwards explains why *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* is truly a new hope...





e've been here before.



Back in 1999, the world was united in excitement about a new *Star Wars* movie. Every generation has a legend and every saga has a beginning, we were told – and we lapped it up. The trailers had been fantastic, so much so that there were stories of

people buying tickets for a film, watching the *Star Wars* teaser and going home before the feature presentation started. The trailers had promised lightsabers. Incredible visuals. Skywalkers. The sound of Darth Vader breathing...

It was supposed to be the seminal moment for a generation who'd grown up feeling the Force, but instead we got trade disputes, senate chambers, a whiny kid and Jar Jar Bleedin' Binks. It was as if millions of voices suddenly cried out in terror, and refused to be silenced because the increasingly influential internet gave them the chance to vocalise their criticism of every little detail.

While the *Star Wars* prequels aren't actually the disasters many people will tell you, they did get a hell of a lot wrong, tarnishing the unconditional love many felt for the *Star Wars* series. A cynic might argue that *The Force*



This baby's got a few surprises left in her, sweetheart.

Awakens, aka *Episode VII*, is destined for a similar fate to *The Phantom Menace*. It has no god-given right to be brilliant, of course, and thousands of Christmases may turn out to be a little less amazing than we'd hoped for if the most anticipated film in the history of, well, forever turns out to be a bit of a damp squib.

But we don't think there's much danger of that. Okay, we've just about come to terms with the fact *Episode VII* probably won't be the best movie ever – it's unlikely to even be the best *Star Wars* movie – but right now there are enough good reasons to get excited about *The Force Awakens* to fill a space cruiser.

TREASURE CHEST

It's been three years since Disney handed George Lucas a cool \$4 billion for the keys to his *Star Wars* Empire. Even though we're yet to see a movie, it's looking like the bargain of the century. There were moans back in 2012 that the move would lead to the Disneyfication of that galaxy far, far away – Jar Jar with Mickey Mouse ears, perhaps, or Chewbacca singing "Whistle While You Wookiee" – but that hellish vision doesn't seem to have come to pass. In fact, as they've done with Marvel, Disney seems content to allow Lucasfilm to make *Star Wars* the way it wants to, with minimal interference from above – the trailers haven't even carried Disney branding. Disney are savvy enough to know that they mess with the *Star Wars* fanbase at their peril, that they could throw away a whole lot of good will (and

Continued on page 52

JJ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
ABRAMS

The man at the helm of

The Force Awakens

What were the challenges of working with both the new and original casts?

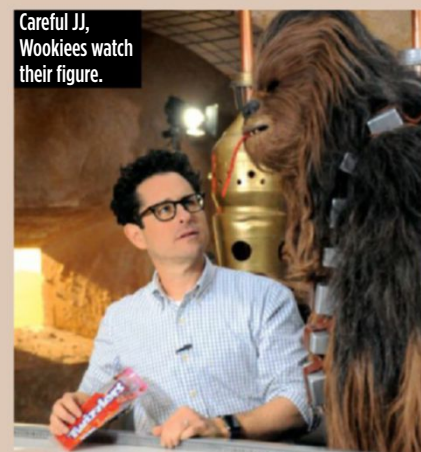
➤ It was incredible fun to work with the original cast, for obvious reasons. But it was sort of a wonderful thing – maybe even the best part – working with all of them, with the new young cast as well. Partly because they brought such energy, and the only baggage they brought to it was they knew of *Star Wars*, and were fans in their own ways. Of course when you imagine almost 40 years going by since you've played a part, that's almost a lifetime of experience to have coming into this. So it was wonderful to have the mix of the brand new and the veteran actors come together. That was really fun.

Did you find yourselves creating an entire mythology necessary for future *Star Wars* films, or were you just concocting a story for *The Force Awakens*?

➤ Well, when [co-writer] Lawrence Kasdan and I were working on the story, we had a sense of where we thought things would go. So of course there are a number of things we use and set up. And it's wonderful to see how [*Episode VIII* director] Rian Johnson has taken our story. Of course we had meetings and stuff beforehand, but he's taken it and really made it his own and continued the story his way. But there are, of course, many things in this film that are very clearly part of a continuum.

As a *Star Wars* fan, did you have any "pinch me" moments on set?

➤ I am not joking when I say that every day there were multiple "pinch me" moments [laughs]. **Joseph McCabe**



Careful JJ, Wookiees watch their figure.

STAR WARS MEMORIES

KEVIN SMITH

WRITER, DIRECTOR, GEEK KING



My first memory of *Star Wars* was with my friend John. We were in the second grade in 1977. He got the first action figures. Right before the movie came out they advertised: "Order these

Star Wars early bird action figures!" It was like a pack that had Darth Vader, R2-D2, Luke Skywalker and Ben Kenobi and maybe Princess Leia. He brought the figures to school and it captured my imagination. I hadn't seen the movie yet, but I went home and immediately everybody was like, "Did you see this *Star Wars* movie?" And then we went that night and, my god, I fell in love. That's when it became my religion. Up until that point I was a seven-day Catholic kid. I was an altar boy. But after I saw *Star Wars* I was a Darth Vader acolyte for the rest of my life. That was where I wanted to live. So if you want to talk about transforming figures, at age seven, holy cow.

Sally Browne



Rey nets a droid – a chap named Teedo looks on.

DAISY RIDLEY



The newcomer who plays Jakku's most famous scavenger, Rey

Does Rey have an equivalent character in the original trilogy?

→ I never thought about where she would fit into. I didn't feel like, "Oh, because I'm a woman I need to be like Princess Leia," or "Oh, because I'm a scavenger I need to be like Han Solo because I'm off doing my own thing." In terms of story, I guess the one I would compare her to most is Luke because he starts off kind of not knowing his own strength and goes off on this emotional journey and finds out who he is. But again, he starts with the family and Rey begins alone. Princess Leia's born into privilege, so that's a totally different thing. There's no one really... I think she's a great new person representing all of the good things to come.

How have you dealt with all the secrecy around the movie?

→ Not being able to tell my best friend [I had the role] was difficult because I was gaining some serious muscle mass, and he was like,

"Where are your guns coming from? Why are you always busy when you were literally unemployed a month ago?" But in terms of the film I think the reason everyone's keeping it a secret is for the best reason possible. You know to a certain extent what to expect – there's going to be droids, there's going to be creatures. But the emotional story, I think, will be a surprise, and that's the best thing possible.

We know Rey shares scenes with Han Solo. How do they come together?

→ Well, you know, we go on a journey together, and he's part of this journey. But the whole film is a journey of many people who come and go and contribute. That's why I think it's so good because it never feels like any one person's really on their own. And it always feels like an ensemble, and it always felt like a family, which is what people really connected to [on the original movies]. I really think pretty much every character in the film influences the others.

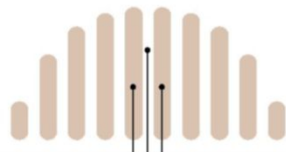
Have you read the script for *Episode VIII* yet?

→ Yes... which is weird, seeing as there are bits of *Episode VII* I literally cannot remember, and then every now and again I'm like, "Oh! That thing happens with that person." So it's weird I haven't even seen *Episode VII* and I've read *Episode VIII*. But *Episode VIII* is very cool. We start principal photography in January.

Richard Edwards

Just two years ago she had a small role in *Casualty*!





GET UP TO LIGHT SPEED

Your crib sheet for *The Force Awakens*

We've plundered press releases, interviews, novels, comics and games* to piece together what's been happening since *Return Of The Jedi*. Facts in black, *SFX* speculation in red.

SOON AFTER RETURN OF THE JEDI...

- The Empire didn't go quietly after the Emperor's demise. Imperial remnants continued to fight the Rebellion (soon rebranded as the New Republic) across the galaxy.
- The late Emperor left a "will" commanding loyal officers to purge planets of strategic importance - including his homeworld, Naboo.
- A pivotal battle took place between the New Republic and the Empire over the desert world of Jakku, a year after the Battle of Endor. The skirmish is where the *Star Destroyer Inferior* (the wreck seen in the second trailer) crash-landed on the planet.
- Darth Vader turned into an icon and a martyr - acolytes painted "Vader Lives" tags on walls, while his lightsaber became a sought-after collector's item.
- While on a mission to liberate Imperial-occupied star systems, Han Solo and Chewbacca defied orders and gathered a ragtag assortment of smugglers and scoundrels in a quest to liberate Chewie's homeworld, Kashyyyk.
- Some Mandalorian armour "pitted and pocked, as if with some kind of acid" was found on Tatooine. **If this doesn't mean Boba Fett escaped the Sarlacc, it's a very cruel joke.**

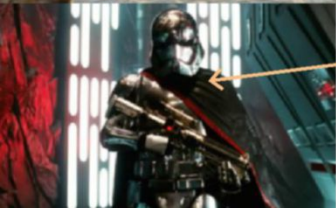
OVER THE NEXT 30 YEARS...

- The First Order, a group with similar ideals to the Empire, will eventually spring up to take its place. Chuck Wendig's *Aftermath* novel, set after the Battle Of Endor, revealed a nameless, manipulative Imperial admiral who, believing the organisation had become an "ugly, inelegant machine", moved to fill the post-Palpatine power vacuum. **We're assuming he played a key role in the formation of the First Order - who knows, he may turn out to be the organisation's leading light, Supreme Leader Snoke.**
- A new organisation called the Resistance will become the principal adversary of the First Order. **They carry Rebel Alliance insignia, so it looks like the group will grow out of the New Republic.**

THE FORCE AWAKENS ERA

- **The Jedi and the Force have apparently disappeared into myth.**
- The First Order has built a new superweapon to put the Death Star to shame. Starkiller Base is an ice planet armed with the firepower to wipe out entire star systems. The facility is commanded by General Hux.
- *Episodes I-IX* (the "Saga" movies) focus on the Skywalker family, so presumably at least one of the new characters will continue the lineage. JJ Abrams says "it's completely intentional that [Rey and Finn's] last names aren't public record," **so don't be surprised if one (or both) turns out to be a chip off the old Skywalker or Solo block.**
- Finn is a First Order Stormtrooper who decides he's "got nothing to fight for" and does a runner. We've seen him brandishing Anakin and Luke's old lightsaber - does he feel the Force, or is this a red herring?
- Finn will join forces with Rey, a scavenger on Jakku. She claims she's "no one", but the trailer implies the Force is calling to her.
- Poe Dameron is the "best frickin' pilot in the galaxy", sent on a mission by a princess. His parents fought alongside Han, Luke and Leia in the Rebel Alliance, and he grew up on Yavin IV near a tree (taken from the old Jedi Temple) that feels the Force. **Could all three leads be Force sensitive?**
- Maz Kanata is a pirate and the owner of a castle populated by a Jabba's Palace-like array of aliens. **Our guess is she's the alien on the poster, and probably the person handing Luke's lightsaber to Leia in the second trailer. We also reckon it's her voice talking about letting the Force in in the latest trailer.**
- Shiny Stormtrooper Captain Phasma is the big-screen franchise's first female villain and, says actress Gwendoline Christie, "the captain of the Stormtroopers".
- Bad guy Kylo Ren is a member of the Knights of Ren and seemingly Vader's biggest fan. He built his own lightsaber, but is *not* a Sith - he's more of a Dark Side work-in-progress, who works for Snoke.
- Snoke is the owner of the voice talking about "an awakening" in the first teaser. He's a performance-capture character, so could be alien, machine or a human with some kind of augmentation.
- Luke is not on the poster. Abrams has said "it's no accident".
- C-3PO has somehow acquired a red arm.
- We still have no idea who or what Max Von Sydow is playing.
- Jar Jar Binks may feature - as a skeleton in the desert.

* We've only used legitimate sources, so there's nothing here from leaked scripts!



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→ potential dollars) if they get it wrong. (Let's not forget that the Marvel movies since the Disney buyout have generally been better and more adventurous than the ones before.)

If that fan-focused approach was ever in doubt, look at the choice of director for *The Force Awakens*. When Disney bought *Star Wars*, JJ Abrams was attached to the *Star Trek* movies, and initially turned down their approach. "I quickly said that, being a fan, I wouldn't even want to be involved in the next version of those things," he said at the time. "I'd rather be in the audience not knowing what was coming, rather than being involved in the minutiae of making them." Lucasfilm boss Kathleen Kennedy refused to take no for an answer, however, and eventually got her man. The lure of Tatooine, TIE Fighters and the Millennium Falcon was just too much for a guy whose solution for rebooting *Star Trek* was to make it more like *Star Wars*.

Like the other directors hired for the *Star Wars* movies coming between now and 2020 (*Episode VIII*'s Rian Johnson, *Episode IX*'s Colin Trevorrow, *Rogue One*'s Gareth Edwards, and the Han Solo movie's Phil Lord and Christopher Miller), Abrams is a huge *Star*

Continued on page 56

STAR WARS MEMORIES

NICK FROST
CORNETTO TRILOGY STAR,
BIG SCREEN BROMANCE



The *Star Wars* trilogy. Even now it touches my life. I'm at a point now with a four-year-old son where we watched *A New Hope* together and it was kind of amazing. He sat there and watched the whole thing. My mum's family were Welsh and so we spent a lot of time there, down on the west coast in Pembrokeshire. I was there all summer. We made camps on the river bank and played with our *Star Wars* figures. Saturday mornings we were allowed to go to a shop next to the cinema in Fishguard – one of those shops where you go in and think, oh it sells rock and postcards and mugs with *Fishguard* on, but the more you go through there's actually a section that sells *Star Wars* figures. Every Saturday we were there buying *Star Wars* figures. My expectation of what JJ is going to do is tremendous. I had a meeting with him before they started. We had lunch and he showed me round the storyboards. I could feel eight-year-old me doing a little spirit wee.

Nick Setchfield

GETTY (3)

TO HELMET AND BACK

Meet the man who sculpted an icon



Of all the big screen's intimidating adversaries, none have left such an indelible mark as *Star Wars*' prime antagonist Darth Vader. Brian Muir, who sculpted the original mask way back in 1976, certainly didn't realise the magnitude of the iconic character he was crafting.

"I'm immensely proud to have been part of Vader's creation but it was impossible to imagine how iconic Vader would become – most of us didn't know what George Lucas was trying to achieve," he admits.

Although he worked from a three quarter-view sketch drawn by costume designer John Mollo, Muir had some significant design influence himself. "To prevent a less robotic appearance, I put a slight asymmetrical difference in Vader's cheeks, which became slightly exaggerated during the moulding and casting process," he reveals. "The menacing appearance continued to evolve by adding tear ducts and extended tubes. I then applied clay to the plaster mask and sculpted the subtle shape of the helmet, carving a strip that formed a widow's peak. It really drew attention to those piercing eyes, and gave Vader that intimidating stare."

Muir also worked on Vader's imposing body armour. "I had a mould of actor David Prowse's body to work from and used Ralph McQuarrie's detailed paintings as reference, while production designer John Barry had final say on any design improvements. The chest piece was the most prominent part of the armour. The fluid lines and subtle design, together with shoulder caps and the addition of a cape, helped to enhance Vader's powerful appearance."

So what's Muir's theory behind why Vader's look has generated such a power that resonates all the way to that chilling glimpse in *The Force Awakens* trailer? "It has so many powerful, menacing aspects. But I feel it's the staring eyes accentuated by the line of the helmet that is particularly unnerving. It generates a primeval fear that has prevailed and is timeless." **Oliver Pfeiffer**

Ralph McQuarrie
concept art featuring
Vader in combat.



Well, Luke's still looking youthful here.

Hmm, wonder why it's
called *Battlefront*...?

BATTLE STATIONS!

The newest *Battlefront* game hurls you into a galaxy far, far away...

The makers of *Battlefront* are well aware of what everyone who sees *The Force Awakens* wants from a *Star Wars* game this year – spectacle: A-Wings circling TIE Fighters in the skies above Hoth, Darth Vader cutting down Rebels and Imperial Walkers being ambushed by snowspeeders... *Battlefront* has clearly been made to please *Star Wars* fans rather than *Call Of Duty* players, which is a wise move. “We are trying to provide for *Star Wars* fans across the board, that’s what this is about: flying X-Wings, being a Jedi, being Stormtroopers and so on,” says design director Niklas Fegraeus. “But at its heart this is a *Battlefront* game, which means that it’s a first-person shooter, and kind of a third-person shooter, which is another important aspect of the franchise. So we are trying to mix the things that are the most important for those audiences, and trying to make a game identity out of it.”

This is, essentially, a very simple game of Rebels vs Imperials, with no choice of classes like in the mid-noughties *Battlefront* games, and instead of giving the player an expansive arsenal, everyone carries a blaster. Other weapons, like sniper rifles, are used as bonus abilities. The maps are set across the rocky, volcanic Sullust, Hoth, Endor and Tatooine, and each is designed to offer varying playing experiences based on the terrain. “Different planets have different identities and structures. If you look at Hoth for example, you have very large snow surfaces, then on Endor there’s trees and rocks all over the place.” Even if it’s a little simple to play, the action looks extraordinary: the Battle of Hoth has never looked this pretty, to the point where it’s easy to forgive the blatant continuity error of Luke running around Hoth with a green lightsaber. With a mode dedicated to fighter combat, too, this is more or less what a big *Star Wars* game should be with *Episode VII* just a month away. **Samuel Roberts**



TIE Fighter vs X-Wing:
place your bets.

STAR WEIRDS ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

We've flown from one side of this galaxy to the other, and we've seen a lot of strange stuff...



MR R2-T2

Ever wondered what everyone's favourite astromech droid was really saying beneath that endless parade of bleeps, squawks and bumbles? Now it can be revealed. "Crazy fool!" goes the rough translation. "I ain't gettin' on no spaceship!" This bling-tastic, *A-Team* styled Artoo – based on a gag from *Family Guy*'s spoof trilogy – is on display at Steve Sansweet's legendary merch shrine Rancho Obi-Wan. Quit yo' jibber-jabber, Jabba!



STAR WARS STEW

Even Darth Vader put his Force-throttling ways on hold to join the *Empire Strikes Back* cast on deathlessly wholesome kids show *Blue Peter* in 1980. Mark Hamill and Carrie Fisher gamely noshed on specially prepared "Star Wars Stew" – sausage, baked beans, chopped tomatoes and Jawa eyeballs. Yum. Alas Harrison Ford wasn't there to do his legendary grump-squint as he spooned down the chow...



HUNGARIAN STAR WARS POSTERS

Imagine the contents of George Lucas's head exploding on mescaline and you're still not even close to the phantasmagorical weirdness of these Hungarian *Star Wars* posters. Like visions glimpsed in a fever dream of a half-remembered movie, they seem to be ripped straight from the unconscious... of a maniac. The Death Star in Darth Vader's eye socket on the *Jedi* one is design genius, mind.

TURKISH STAR WARS

Defying the pesky laws of copyright like the Rebel fleet evading a flotilla of Star Destroyers, 1982's *Dünyayı Kurtaran Adam* aka *The Man Who Saved The World* is a Turkish sci-fi movie that splices micro-budget heroics with NASA rocket launch footage and, rather boldly, stolen chunks of *Star Wars* itself, tinted a sickly hue in a bid to hide the crime. Still, more faithful than the Special Editions...



BLAME IT ON THE WOOKIEE

Beamed from a boogieified parallel universe where the Empire unleashed the might of the Death Glitterball, this addled dance routine sees troupes of Vaders and flying Threepios engaged in synchronised frugging to a funky-up version of the *Star Wars* theme. Rumoured to hail from a '70s French variety show but, unsurprisingly, no one's taken credit. Behold the madness at <http://bit.ly/starwarsdisco>.

ALAN MOORE DOES STAR WARS

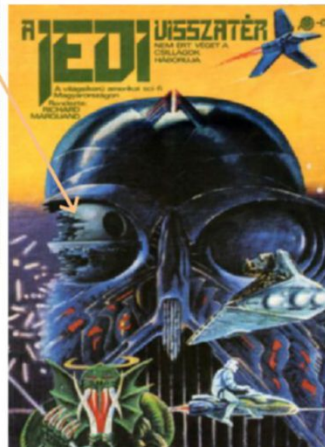
Future comics magus Alan Moore entered a galaxy far, far away in the early '80s. "Tilotny Throws A Shape", a strip for Britain's *The Empire Strikes Back Monthly*, made the jump to headspace rather than hyperspace, marooning Princess Leia on a world where pan-conceptual entities cry "I've invented form! I've invented mass! Oh, cleverest Tilotny! Everything has edges!" Goddam bloody hippies.



THE POWER OF THE FORCE BEAM

It takes a certain deranged bravery to pimp your copyright-busting lightsaber knock-off in the Lucas-approved pages of *Star Wars Weekly* itself. We'd award them a Rebel medal for sheer chutzpah were it not for the fact that one of the ads may, just may, be the worst picture in the history of the world. Unless it's by a chimpanzee, in which case it's ruddy brilliant.

Nick Setchfield



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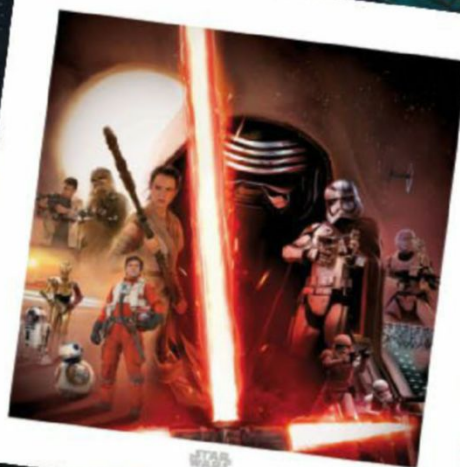
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All the images on these pages will come together like a magical jigsaw when you see the film.

JOHN BOYEGA



From *Attack The Block* to the First Order as Finn

→ *Wars* geek. He doesn't have to guess what someone might love about a *Star Wars* movie because it's part of his DNA, the original movie being one of the formative cinematic experiences that shaped his desire to become a filmmaker. Even George Lucas, the man who created the franchise, didn't have that hotline to the fans when he came to make the prequels – that's arguably one of the reasons the films he wanted to make were so far removed from what the *Star Wars* faithful desired. And if JJ ever wanted to get back to the spirit of the original trilogy, he had the good sense to draft *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return Of The Jedi* scripter Lawrence Kasdan to co-write when Oscar-winner Michael Arndt departed.

Abrams – and Lucasfilm as a whole – appear to be using the prequels as a guide of “what not to do” with a *Star Wars* movie. Much has been made of the decision to film as much live action as possible, with real sets, costumes and props. When even BB-8, the physics-defying ball droid, was revealed as a live-action prop – even though it would have arguably been easier to create on a computer – it was clear we were stepping into new territory. It's real, it's dirty and a welcome return to the used-universe chic that reinvented screen sci-fi back in 1977, and a much-needed departure from the

Continued on page 58

How was it working with the returning cast, like Mark Hamill and Harrison Ford?

→ It was fantastic working with those guys. You're going to be quite surprised about how they are very much involved in this new story. It's fantastic being involved with people who are genuinely excited to revisit their past, their history, and present a new narrative to the audience now. It's very gracious of them, I think.

JJ Abrams is a massive *Star Wars* fan. What was it like shooting with him?

→ I think the most amazing thing about JJ is seeing him geek out at moments that he himself was involved in planning. You were there when we were talking about these ideas, but then seeing it in his face, he would always have a very geeky reaction to it. It's really cool to have a *Star Wars* fan direct a *Star Wars* movie because you know that person is going to take the fans' ideas into consideration, as well as paying homage to something everybody loves.

So what's the main thing JJ brings to the table?

→ When the first trailer came out, my favourite part – apart from me popping out of nowhere – was the Millennium Falcon. Did you see that shot? When the camera's just upside down and it focuses, refocuses, after the Millennium Falcon levels out? That's JJ Abrams right there. It gives you a taste of what he will do. Even though he's doing all these futuristic shots, it still feels like the originals. There's a look that

feels like you're watching a continuation of what we had before. It's a good balance of the old and new.

Finn gets to wear Stormtrooper armour and wield a lightsaber. Did you geek out?

→ Oh, it's exciting. Those images are the things that make me love Finn more and more each day. And every time I get to speak about him, I really do see it as an opportunity to kind of discover who this dude is. For me, it's so exciting because we have a character who will do everything a fan would want to do. If you were a fan coming on set, you'd want to wear the Stormtrooper outfit, then you'd want to go and hold the lightsaber. Then you'd want to run away from explosions. Finn gets to be involved in both sides, so for me, as a fanboy, it just means I get to do different stuff. I'm like, “Yes! More.” It's great. **Richard Edwards**



From Stormtrooper to... where?



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→ computerised, cartoon sheen that made sure the prequels have dated faster than movies two decades their senior.

And on paper the story after *Return Of The Jedi* has much more appeal than prequels whose Empire wins/Darth Vader rises conclusion was never in doubt. We're in virgin storytelling territory here, every plot twist taking us somewhere new and unexpected. It makes complete dramatic sense that the death of the Emperor and the destruction of Death Star II didn't actually lead to century after

Could this be Maz Kanata's castle?



STAR WARS MEMORIES

DAVE FILONI

CO-CREATOR/EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
ON *STAR WARS REBELS*



What I remember is driving home after seeing *A New Hope*. My brother and I were blasting away at all the other automobiles like we were Han and Luke in the Millennium Falcon. It really made a huge impression on us. And I think this is true for a lot of fans, but the music was key. Besides the amazing visuals, which were unlike anything I'd seen at the time, the music is so powerful and so memorable.

My parents are both big fans of opera and symphony, so the music kind of became a great language between me and my parents, because my father would play the records. He would show me music in his collection, and play something from Strauss to show how it's similar to something John Williams had done in *Star Wars*, or something from Wagner. It just became a great link between me and my parents. I think *Star Wars* has done that for a bunch of different generations. It allows kids and parents to get together and watch something that they can truly enjoy and appreciate and come together on. I think that's one of the traits of the *Star Wars* franchise; something that makes it strong.

Richard Edwards

GETTY (1)

century of jubilant Ewok dancing. The names of the factions may have changed in the 30 years since the "Yub-Nub" (the First Order and the Resistance subbing for the Empire and the Rebellion), but the battle continues. And *Star Wars* is more exciting when there's conflict at its centre.

It's a chance for ordinary people on forgotten planets to come to the fore and become heroes. The prequel movies were completely lacking in characters to relate to, humans and aliens battling the odds, and engaging character arcs – the Jedi were more-or-less indestructible, had limitless resources and were effectively superheroes. We may not know much about Finn and Rey (not even their surnames), but it's clear that they're cut more from the Han/Luke/Leia outsider template than Obi-Wan or even Anakin.

GLORIOUS ICONOGRAPHY

And then there's all the fan buttons the movie's hitting. The Millennium Falcon! Stormtroopers! Han! Luke! Leia! Chewie! C-3PO! R2-D2! If JJ did nothing else, they could have brought back those elements and been on the right track. Those icons are the reasons we fell in love with *Star Wars* in the first place – we've seen movies without (most of) them, and there's no doubt that *Star Wars* movies work better with the screech of a TIE Fighter or Han Solo being, well, Han Solo.

Because *Star Wars* is unique. People love the *Lord Of The Rings* and *Marvel* movies, but they live *Star Wars*. For millions of people, the original trilogy transported them to new worlds, and completely immersed them in a galaxy that may never have existed but always felt incredibly real – opening the door to big screen sci-fi in a way nothing before or since has managed.

So look beyond the inevitable merchandise overload – this is, after all, as much a capitalistic endeavour as an artistic one – and believe the hype. For kids it's a chance to visit worlds unlike any they've seen before, for adults (and you get the sense this is who the movie's really been designed for), this is the opportunity to be transported back to watching the originals when we were kids.

Just picture yourself in that cinema in December, the opening bars of John Williams' theme kicking in (don't worry too much about the lack of the Twentieth Century Fox fanfare), and the words of an unfamiliar opening crawl scrolling up the screen. Just remember how you felt when the Millennium Falcon swooped in that first teaser, or Han Solo told Chewie they were home – then multiply it by approximately 3,720. *The Force Awakens*, it's calling to you. Just let it in. ●

Star Wars: The Force Awakens opens in cinemas on 17 December.



Domhnall Gleeson's General Hux looks to be in the villainous vein of Peter Cushing.

Ooh, shiny!

OSCAR ISAAC

Meet Poe Dameron, the best
frickin' pilot in the galaxy

Did you have any standout moments working on the film?

→ When we first got together to read the script and the first time we saw all of the cast together, and the first time I heard Anthony Daniels speak like C-3PO again, that was a pretty wild moment.

Do you think the new costumes will be iconic like the originals?

→ I think Michael Kaplan is an amazing costume designer, and he's created some really iconic costumes for us. So yeah, I think, yeah, they'll definitely be fused with the characters.

Your character appears to be quite the badass. How does he differ from some of the other badasses we've seen in these films, like Han Solo?

→ Because this guy's playing him. That's why! Joseph McCabe



Resistance scum...



If this is Kylo Ren, where's Kylo Stimpy?

GWENDOLINE CHRISTIE



The *Game Of Thrones* star takes charge of the Stormtroopers as Captain Phasma



Hooray! The trailer's one glimpse of Leia.



They have experience of this position.

Captain Phasma's face is obscured by a helmet. How does that change the way you perform?

➤ With Captain Phasma, the reason I got so excited about it was it was dealing with a female character in a way that felt new and exciting to me. It wasn't about that random bunch of elements that come together that we have absolutely no control over, that dictates the way we look in the flesh. It was that we have a relationship with this character based on her actions, and based on her choices. It was very interesting to play someone where the primary sensory functions are not at the fore; that actually it becomes about something else. What became very exciting about that challenge was that the way in which I move my body was going to inform the audience as much as what I said. I then got very excited about how this armour, wearing the armour, how it would translate. You start to put the emphasis in direct areas to try to create a character.

As a fan, did you have a moment when it suddenly sunk in you were in *Star Wars*?

➤ Every. Single. Day. And what was wonderful was that it felt like everybody working on the

film felt the same way. There was such excitement about it from everybody, from all the cast, from all the crew, from everybody working on the film, that everybody was having it at the same time, and that's why it was such a delightful thing to be a part of. **Richard Edwards**

So are any of the other Stormtroopers female too?



NATALIE DORMER

From Margaery to *Mockingjay*, and loving her sci-fi and fantasy

Words by Stephen Kelly // Photography by Anna Huix

On Natalie Dormer's left forearm lies a quote from *Dune*, the 1965 sci-fi novel by Frank Herbert – later a muddled film by David Lynch. “Fear is the mind-killer” it says; not only a reminder to “take myself out of my comfort zone,” but further proof that Dormer is geeky as hell. For her career has been one forged in fantasy; in her deft portrayal of Margaery Tyrell, the aspiring queen in *Game Of Thrones*, a character who lives and breathes and schemes in a way she never did in George RR Martin's books. Today, however, sitting in a London hotel, she's here to talk about the final instalment of *The Hunger Games* – another tick on the list. She plays Cressida, a propagandist director in charge of selling Katniss Everdeen. Friendly, clever and impassioned, she doesn't do a bad job of selling herself either.

Not every role needs to be over-thought, but Cressida – a propagandist director – must be an interesting one to approach?

☛ Definitely. All you really need to do is turn on a TV, and look at the latest images from the news, and you start to realise that everything that's in a frame is packaged in some way, shape or form. It's all too familiar. Be it Syria, or the Yemen, or wherever – the themes that *Mockingjay* deals with are not that far from what we're seeing on our TVs right now. I think that's why I like the films and books so much. They don't patronise or talk down to a young adult audience about those controversial, darker sides of human nature. And the consequences of war.

Do you think our appetite for that darker, violent tone – the same seen in *Game Of Thrones* – says something about where the world is at today?

☛ But the new *Macbeth* movie just came out, and that's not specific to our era. That is mankind. We are a violent species. And whether you're looking at Shakespeare, the Romans, the Greeks and so on, they're musing about war. I think mankind always has a slight fascination with violence and death. Because it's omnipresent, right? And it's how we cathartically vent it.

How big of a sci-fi and fantasy fan are you?

☛ Massive. I'd be lying if I said I wasn't excited about the new *Star Wars* movie, and that's not just because my friend

Gwen [Christie] is in it. I am very excited about it. I have that *Dune* quote on my arm for a reason! I've always thought that sci-fi is a way for people – like we just said – to vent concerns at a safe distance. I've always had a soft spot for it.

Have you got any gossip out of Gwen?

☛ She's sworn to secrecy! She won't tell us anything. I asked her about her costume a year ago, and she just went, “I can't tell you anything, Natalie.” And it's really annoying. All of us on *Game Of Thrones*, we're all used to keeping secrets – but not from each other!

Speaking of secrets – how many people have asked you if Jon Snow is alive?

☛ Quite a few... Are you about to add to that list?

Course not! Going into series six of *Game Of Thrones*, is it any different for you now that the show has gone past the books?

☛ It's not a pressure that I feel the cast are aware of. That responsibility lies more with the creators. But Dan and David seem to be taking it very much in their stride. They had a big pow-wow with George a couple of years ago in case this eventuality was going to happen, and George is obviously a producer on the show, so I feel like it has been discussed and kicked around. And whatever choices they have made, would've been made with the blessing of George RR Martin. There'll be a few book purists that maybe will look at it differently, but I don't think it's that big a deal. I say that respectfully.

This is uncharted territory for Margaery, though – do you get nervous every time a script comes through?

☛ She's a wily one – give her some time. She'll be alright.

How have you found her development over the last few years?

☛ Like most people in *Game Of Thrones*, she's had her fingers burnt enough to be a bit jaded and sceptical. I enjoy playing her. There's a sort of the link between Cressida and Margaery, actually – a year and a half of my work has gone into two women that excelled in propaganda and spin.

How long do you think you would actually last in the *Hunger Games*?

☛ Not very long. I'm no Katniss Everdeen!

And your weapon of choice?

☛ A camera! I'd film the whole thing and do an exposé when I finally got out.

You would almost certainly not get out.

☛ Posthumously! ●

The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2 opens on 19 Nov.

Biodata

Occupation

→ Actress

Born

→ 11 February 1982

From

→ Reading
Greatest hits
→ *The Tudors*,
The Fades, *Game Of Thrones*,
Elementary, *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Parts 1 & 2*

Random fact

→ Despite what it says on the internet, Dormer is not related to Duchess of Fera Jane Dormer, who was lady in waiting to Queen Mary I – otherwise known as Bloody Mary.



**“I’D BE LYING IF I SAID
I WASN’T EXCITED
ABOUT THE NEW
STAR WARS MOVIE”**

What would the world look like if the Axis powers won World War Two? It's a question that's inspired dozens of dystopian alternate history tales across film, TV, literature and videogames. Philip K Dick's classic novel *The Man In The High Castle* is arguably the best but, like the majority of Dick's work, its brilliance went largely unrecognised when first published in 1962. Since his death, however, Dick has become one of SF's most celebrated wordsmiths, one enthusiastically adapted for the screen by the world's biggest filmmakers. Former *X-Files* writer and *Man In The High Castle* showrunner Frank Spotnitz puts that down to the author's unparalleled prescience.

"I think his work is increasingly relevant. If anything it was *too* out there at the time for people to appreciate," Spotnitz tells *SFX* from the middle of the busy show floor at New York Comic Con. "I still struggle with what the ending of *The Man In The High Castle* means, but the themes are so timeless and timely."

The show's turbulent journey to the screen saw it almost adapted as a four-part miniseries by both the BBC (in 2010) and Syfy (in 2013) before Amazon got hold of Spotnitz's script. Released as part of the annual pilot season earlier this year, the first episode went on to be the streaming service's most-watched pilot ever, eclipsing even Emmy-award-winning critical darling *Transparent*. In the transition to the screen Spotnitz made some key changes to the novel's narrative, shifting the focus to double agent Joe Blake (Luke Kleintank), resistance recruit Juliana Crain (Alexa Davalos) and her boyfriend Frank Frink (Rupert Evans).

"In the book Juliana and Frank are already split up. I wanted to rewind a bit and see them in their relationship so that I had something I could care about and threaten, and then let Joe come in," Spotnitz explains. "So it's a love triangle where Juliana is between these two



Rufus Sewell might play a character called John Smith, but he's a ruthless Nazi.

NEW WORLD ORDER

Philip K Dick's acclaimed alt-history novel
THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE
is heading to the small screen.
Jordan Farley joins
the resistance...

men, but on a deeper level she's between two different ways of looking at the world she's in."

Set in 1962, 15 years after the end of the war, *The Man In The High Castle*'s America is divided between the powerful Greater Nazi Reich, who occupy the East, the Japanese Pacific States in the West and the Neutral Rocky Mountain States in the middle. After her sister Trudy is murdered by Japanese police in San Francisco, Juliana assumes Trudy's place in the resistance and risks execution to transport "The Grasshopper Lies Heavy" – a faux news reel depicting an Allied victory in WW2 – to Canon City in the neutral zone. Joe also appears to be working for the resistance and crosses paths with Juliana, before being revealed as a Nazi agent.

"My character has changed a lot," says Kleintank. "In the book he's a soldier and his eye's on the prize, but here he's conflicted a lot more with his mission."

Joe reports to John Smith (Rufus Sewell) – a ruthless Nazi *Obergruppenführer* created for the show. But rather than a typical psychopathic blackshirt, Smith comes with complex cultural baggage. "What I was eager to do was not make him the stock Nazi," Spotnitz explains. "He's an American Nazi, a really good father, a really good husband, a good leader. Everyone looks up to him. It just so happens he's a Nazi."

"My concern after the pilot was that my character was some creation by the executives so that the story would have an overriding one-dimensional evil," Sewell adds. "After reading episode two, which goes a lot more into his private life, and being assured that the point was to have someone who was a human being but represented a face of Nazism in America, then it became something interesting for me."

One of the major characters missing from the pilot is antique shop owner Robert Childan, who trades in America's heritage with the Japanese, including minor official Nobusuke Tagomi (Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa). Spotnitz confirms that Childan will debut later in the →



Ed McCarthy (DJ Qualls)
and Frank Frink (Rupert
Evans) are fighting back.



Will Julia Crain (Alexa Davalos) and Joe Blake (Luke Kleintank) drink the Kool-Aid?



season. "He comes in in episode four and then continues throughout. He's actually one of the most faithful adaptations. There are some scenes that are almost word for word the way they were in the book. With the streaming model that Amazon has you can treat it like a novel, so you don't have to introduce everything in the first episode."

"In a sense we have chapters," Davalos continues. "There's 10 chapters, and you can sit down and watch three or four, or watch the whole damned thing. It's over a 14-day period, our entire first season. I love the format."

SHADOWING THE BOOK

Despite the myriad changes, Spotnitz has remained unwaveringly loyal to the themes and ideas the novel explores. "Probably the most challenging to address, because it's so intellectual, is what is the nature of reality?" Spotnitz says. "He has these interesting ideas about historicity and what's the difference between an authentic object and an inauthentic object. The second one is what is human? And how do you maintain humanity if you're living in an inhuman world? And there's a third theme, which is more prominent in the series, which is what is freedom? What would you

“Ridley Scott would point us to films, including *Blade Runner*, and specific scenes”

sacrifice to be free? That's the one that is most unsettling because you're not used to seeing the good guys lose. And not only have Americans lost, most of them are resigned to their defeat. What would it take to get Americans to fight back, to try and change their future? That's the question I wanted to ask."

The other key challenge beyond adapting Philip K Dick's esoteric prose into something that would work on TV was visualising a world turned upside down – a tricky (and expensive) business. "Fortunately Amazon has deep pockets!" Spotnitz says. "But it's a big imagination challenge as well. I talked to a lot of historians about what the values of a Nazi society would have been if they'd won the war.

And then that informed the production design, so it's very much about industry and agriculture and state control. And you ask yourself, 'Would cars in the early '60s have had the giant fins that they had? Would you have had that sense of optimism and the *Jetsons* technology in home appliances?' There were a thousand decisions like that."

Spotnitz also had help from a man with experience adapting Philip K Dick – Ridley Scott, who produced the show under the Scott Free banner. "It was mostly in the area of cinematography and production design, but we had many calls about the principles that should guide us in designing this world," Spotnitz explains. "He would point us to films, including *Blade Runner*, and specific shots and scenes that he thought we should use as guides and inspiration. He and the lead director for the series, Daniel Percival, put together this style book with dozens of images from different films and paintings that were used as reference for every director that came on the show."

As anyone who has read the book will know, the story ends on an ambiguous note. It was a tale Dick tried to return to several times before his death, with numerous failed sequel ideas transforming into entirely new novels. Spotnitz, who envisions a long life for the show, already knows his story has a different destination.

"The series will have a different ending entirely," Spotnitz reveals. "The storylines and ideas are being laid out in a slightly different order. But for me the way to execute a series successfully is to follow one character's emotional journey and because you don't know in TV whether you're going to go two years or 10 years you have to be able to collapse or expand as needed. That's my strategy. I know what happens in the last episode for Juliana. I know what her character journey is, and everything else is an exploration as we go." ●

The Man In The High Castle is on Amazon Prime Instant Video from 20 November.

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JESSICA JONES



THE DEVIL IN

MISS JONES

Marvel's second Netflix TV series has darkness to rival *Daredevil*. Josh Winning goes undercover to uncover the mysteries of **JESSICA JONES...**

Forget what you know about female superheroes and meet Jessica Jones. Bitter, bruised, a champion of “resting bitch face”, this super-strong private eye takes crap from no one and you won’t catch her wearing a catsuit. Oh, and make-up? Fuhgeddaboutit.

“False eyelashes and hairspray weren’t allowed on the set,” says *Jessica Jones* showrunner Melissa Rosenberg, chatting to *SFX* during a much-needed break in London. “And there was an extremely conscious effort to never have her play the honey pot. You know, any time you have a female cop or

detective, in the first episode you’re going to have that character put in high heels, a tight bandage dress and go out and seduce somebody. Never was gonna happen here.”

In other words, welcome back to Hell’s Kitchen. Set in the same New York neighbourhood that *Daredevil* calls home, →



It's not looking like, say, *Age Of Ultron* just yet...

Jessica Jones is the second of Marvel's Netflix TV shows. Sharing a few guest players with the *Man Without Fear*'s show (notably Rosario Dawson as nurse Claire Temple), it's every bit as grubby, violent and morally ambiguous as its forebear. And if you thought *Daredevil*, which debuted to great acclaim in April, was dark, you ain't seen nothing yet.

"One of the things I love about this character is she's so deeply damaged, and yet at her core, she wants to do something good," Rosenberg says. "She wants to contribute something good to the world. It's buried deep in there... Where I connected to her was the damage, that's what attracted me, because we're all damaged on some level, in some way, and that makes her accessible. Otherwise she's quite a tough character, you know, she's got a lot of defences up and that broken aspect of her is the audience's way into her vulnerability."

If *Daredevil* was a *Goodfellas*-esque legal drama with teeth, *Jessica Jones* revels in noir-ish terrain (Roman Polanski's *Chinatown* was a touchstone for the series both narratively and visually). Nocturnal, haunted by her past, always ready with a hip-flask and a fist, Jones recalls the Bogies and Mitchums of '30s and '40s film noir. While her origin story remains a mystery for the first half of the season (in the comics, Jones acquires super-strength after a car crash that results in her being doused with radioactive chemicals), what we do know is that after a spin saving innocents in spandex, tragedy prompted Jones to bin her super-suit.

Now, she works as a private detective, taking cases on a freelance basis, as well as doing grunt work for high-powered attorney Jeri Hogarth (Carrie-Anne Moss). "Not only does she have quite the dramatic childhood, but in her more recent past she's a victim of rape, and her way of having dealt with that thus far is to forget it," says Rosenberg, "but it keeps creeping out – the only way out is through. So



David Tennant's Kilgrave is the mean, mind-controlling baddie.

she gets that opportunity and that part of our 13-hour arc is really dealing with that violence, and if you will, taking back the night."

DIGGING THE DARKNESS

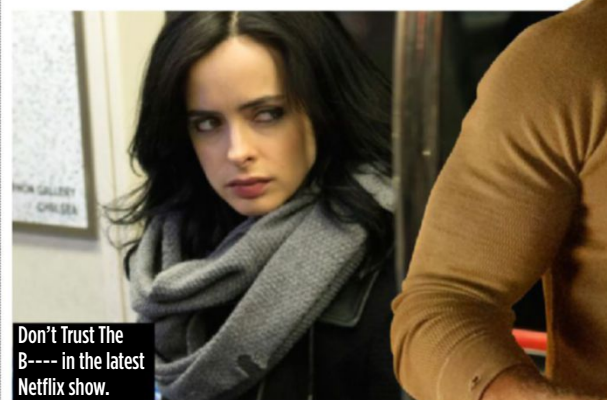
It wasn't always going to be this way. In 2010, before Marvel signed a deal with Netflix to produce four gritty TV shows starring its street-level heroes, Rosenberg was approached by Marvel TV chief Jeph Loeb, who handed her a copy of Brian Michael Bendis's 2001 comic series *Alias*. Having spent over a decade writing for shows like *Dark Skies* and *Dexter*, Rosenberg couldn't get enough of Bendis's moody page-turner. "I just fell in love with it," she says. "I went, 'Look, this is a really dark comic book, this is a really dark character! I have no intention of lightening it, I want to go exactly where this comic goes – and further.'"

She quickly set about developing the show for ABC, the network that currently airs *Agents Of SHIELD* and *Agent Carter*, and it seemed like the perfect home for Marvel's next small-screen outing. "When we sold it to ABC Network, they were like, 'Yeah, for sure!'" Rosenberg remembers. Just over a year later, though, ABC passed, and Rosenberg went back to the drawing board. "Ultimately, it was really too dark for network television," she admits.

Three years after that blockade, Marvel struck its deal with Netflix, and *Jessica Jones* finally got acceptance. There were early concerns, though, particularly because the show would be part of the Marvel Expanded Universe. In the comics, Jones has ties to

everybody from *Daredevil* (he hires her as a bodyguard) and *Ant-Man* (they dated), and Rosenberg admits she was initially "afraid that was going to be restrictive". "In the end, actually, it was only valuable," the showrunner says. "The mythology is so well-defined that having this world to play in was really fun. No one ever stepped in and said, 'You have to do it this way because it's part of the Marvel canon.'"

And where ABC balked at Jones' R-rated content – its first episode in particular climaxes with an upsettingly bloody encounter – there were few limits placed on this new incarnation. "The only limit, really, from Marvel, was that we could do anything but say the 'F' word," Rosenberg reveals. There was also a ban on explicit nudity, with Rosenberg saying: "There's pretty graphic sex, but it's more suggestive than blatant nudity. Other than



Don't Trust The B----- in the latest Netflix show.



those two things, there's no boundaries, we just go all the way with everything."

Though it would take another two years for *Jones* to go in front of cameras – shooting both on sound stages and on location in New York between February and August 2015 – one constant was Krysten Ritter. The 33-year-old actress, then best known for her roles in TV's

Don't Trust The B---- In Apartment 23 and season two of *Breaking Bad*, was one of the first people to read for the role, "and she really set the bar for everyone else," Rosenberg says. "No one else could hit it. Krysten has amazing dramatic chops as well as comedic."

Even more importantly, Ritter wasn't afraid of getting her fists bruised. She's introduced throwing a guy through a glass door, and goes on to tackle a bar brawl with love interest Luke Cage (Mike Colter), another of the show's key players. "She'd never really done stunts before," Rosenberg reveals of her star, "so she got in there and after her first take she was jazzed.

Mike Colter looking the part as Luke Cage, aka Power Man.

“One of the things I love about this character is that she's so damaged”

Like, "That was so cool!" She loved doing them, but we went through three different stunt doubles for her. One broke her foot, the other hurt her neck, another one had another issue, Krysten herself got injured a couple of times..."

Violence of a more psychological variety is what really drives this first season, though, not least when it comes to the show's Big Bad. Just as in the comics, Jones's nemesis is Kilgrave (David Tennant), whose ability to manipulate people's minds means he can turn just about anybody into his slave – and he's key to Jones's tormented past. Though he's a waking nightmare for Jones, Rosenberg has nothing but praise for Tennant. "He's one of the finest actors I've ever had the pleasure of working with," she enthuses. "He brings so much to what he does on so many different levels. We ended up having these full monologues, pages of dialogue for him, just because we wanted to hear him do them!"

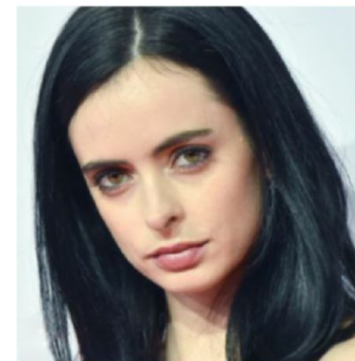
This may just be the beginning for Jessica Jones, but she's a vital part of the jigsaw puzzle that is Marvel TV. Solo shows for Luke Cage and Iron Fist are also in the works, with miniseries *The Defenders* on the horizon. "There's a lot of story that has to happen between now and then," Rosenberg acknowledges. "They each have their own story before anybody knows what the group is. Each show is able to do its own thing. I hadn't even seen all the *Daredevils* before we started shooting, and the Luke Cage people haven't seen everything we've done. It's really so that each one has its own vision, and yet there is this universe that we're part of, so you'd watch us and we'd glance off the *Daredevil* world, but we're really our own thing."

As for the future, like *Daredevil*, a second season of *Jessica Jones* is dependent on the reception of its first. That hasn't been a hindrance for Rosenberg, though. "At the end of season one, we leave Jessica in a really interesting place where her life is about to change," she explains. "It's a bit of a cliffhanger. We leave ourselves as many dangling threads as we can and then we start weaving together when we get there." Something tells us this isn't the last we'll see of Miss Jones. ●

Jessica Jones begins on Netflix on 20 November. Read more about her comic book history overleaf.

GET YOUR JONES ON

Meet Krysten Ritter, aka JESSICA JONES



Had you heard of Jessica Jones before you auditioned for the role?

→ No, I hadn't. In fact, my manager pitched me the show so badly. He was like, "You're so right for it. She's a superhero, but she's really bad at it." I was like, "Okay, so you're not pitching it very well." I had a meeting with Marvel, with Jeph Loeb, and I read the script. He locked me in a room, took away my cellphone. When I came out, I was blown away. I didn't know what to expect, but I certainly didn't expect this badass, rich character.

What did you like most about the character?

→ This is everything I ever wished to do, all in one part. She is vulnerable, she's very funny at times, she's kicking ass, she's walking around the city looking like a badass. Just everything about her, I was like, "Oh, this is it. This is my part." I'm still pinching myself that here we are talking about it.

Is it quite intimidating coming into the Marvel fold?

→ Sometimes it is, and sometimes I just try not to think about it. I'm not naive to the fact that Marvel is a giant super-brand, and there will be eyeballs. Yeah, it's overwhelming and sometimes I'm like, "Oh, shit!" But at the end of the day, creatively, all I really think about is the character.

She's also the first female Marvel superhero to headline her own show. Does that come with extra pressures?

→ It definitely comes with its own extra excitement. It felt very groundbreaking, very exciting. I would love for a generation, the girls coming up behind me, to be inspired by this character, and to show there can be strong, amazing female antiheroes. Jessica Jones is unique. **Josh Winning**

GETTY (3)



ALIAS

As Marvel's **JESSICA JONES** hits the small screen, Stephen Jewell digs deep into her comic book origins

After making her debut in *Alias* #1 in 2001, caped crusader-turned-private detective Jessica Jones will soon follow in the footsteps of Daredevil to headline the second of Netflix's quartet of Marvel series.

"It's like, 'They're really going to give this foul-mouthed PI her own show?'" laughs creator Brian Bendis. "Out of all the things that Marvel has got, you'd think that her show would maybe come after *Night Thrasher*! But here we are with this quite wonderful Jessica Jones show."

Starting out in the mid 1990s as a writer/artist on series like *Jinx*, AKA *Goldfish* and *Torso* for independent companies like Caliber and Oni, Bendis's first big break arrived in 1999 when he was recruited by Todd McFarlane to pen *Spawn* spin-off *Sam And Twitch*. Centring on a pair of homicide detectives, it proved to be an unexpected success, leading to Bendis helming another *Spawn* tie-in, *Hellspawn*. Having already been offered the opportunity to reprint Daredevil for Joe Quesada's Marvel Knights imprint and charged with taking Peter Parker back to his roots in *Ultimate Spider-Man*, he quit with *Hellspawn* #10 after becoming disenchanted with its "dark horror" only to then be fired from *Sam And Twitch* as well.



Not, perhaps, the typical abode of a future Avenger.



There's no Pls without smoke.

"Joe Quesada then called about 30 minutes after it happened, and I said 'the weirdest thing has just happened,'" recalls Bendis. "And he said 'that's weird because one of the things I wanted to talk to you about was doing a crime comic for us, so why don't you take your *Sam And Twitch* time and put it towards creating a ground-level, crime book for Marvel?'"

Initially Bendis contemplated exploring a different side to Jessica Drew, aka Spider-Woman. "But as I was developing it, it quickly revealed itself to not be about her at all," he continues. "It didn't match her background or continuity, and revealed itself to be a whole new character. But I didn't know how to pitch it because in my head, it was rated 'R' and Marvel didn't do those kinds of books at the time."

Originally called *Marvel Incorporated*, it prompted Marvel's then-Vice President Bill Jemas to launch the mature readers-focused Max line, although not before yet another name change. "My other suggestion was *Alter Ego*, but that was the title of Roy Thomas's magazine, so we came up with *Alias* instead," says Bendis. "We were off and

running and then four months later, there were all these billboards around town for JJ Abrams' TV show *Alias* and I went, 'Shit!'"

In need of an artist, Bendis turned to fellow Cleveland Institute of Art alumnus Michael Gaydos. "We didn't want her to be a big-boobed Bad Girl, as stuff like *Lady Death* was big at the time, and that wasn't the kind of story we were telling," explains Bendis, who, despite signing a contract to create Jessica Jones for Marvel before Gaydos was involved, has ensured that the artist receives equal credit on the Netflix show. "Without the visual component that he brought, which was her true humanity, she wouldn't exist or feel the way that people think of her. →

“It’s like, ‘They’re really going to give this foul-mouthed PI her own show?’”

When people see the TV show, even though Krysten Ritter looks different to our Jessica, she is really living and breathing Michael Gaydos’s Jessica Jones.”

With Bendis wanting her to be drawn “like a real person”, Gaydos based Jessica on his now ex-wife. “*Alias* was such a strong character-driven book and it was important to me to really make the expressive nature of these characters believable, and especially Jessica,” says Gaydos. “I think being in a close relationship for a long period of time really helped me bring the subtle nuances of Jessica to life. Brian’s writing was also perfectly realistic and effortless, so I attempted to get that same type of feel in the art.”

Describing it as “the superhero version of *Chinatown*”, *Alias*’s distinctive mash-up of the crime and superhero genres predated similarly themed series like *Gotham Central*, which itself gave rise to the *Gotham* TV series last year. “My notes at the time included things like ‘what if you’re not a very good Avenger?’” says Bendis, who drew on an interview with *Blade Runner* actress Sean Young that he’d read in *Premiere* magazine.

“She was talking about how when you’ve been on the A-list and since been get kicked off, you still know where all the good parties are, you just don’t get invited to them anymore. It would be like a superhero knowing where Avengers Mansion was but not getting that ‘Avengers Assemble’ call. With Jessica, one of those big supervillain bust-ups didn’t go her way and it ruined her.”

Forming her own agency, *Alias Private Investigations*, Jessica re-establishes herself as a detective-for-hire and gradually learns to value her abilities again. “She doesn’t see herself as a superhero or even a hero, but we see in the early issues of *Alias* that she will pursue a case whether she gets paid or not,” he says. “By any definition, that’s heroic, and writing about her self-discovery and the healing of her broken wings and wounds was something worth writing about. It also allowed me to create this character that fitted perfectly into the world of the books that I loved in the ’70s and ’80s like *Power Man* and *Iron Fist* and *Ms Marvel*. It was fun – even though this is a swear word in comics – to retcon

ALL POWER TO YOU

The brother from another mother

→ Debuting a year before *Alias* in 2000, Brian Bendis’s *Powers* also centres on an ex-superhero who investigates their own kind. But despite similarities in their former codenames, Bendis insists that the two series are far from alike. “In *Powers*, Walker is called Diamond and Jessica is called Jewel, so that’s my tip of the hat,” he laughs. “They’re like a philosophical brother and sister, as Walker lost his powers and was sent back down to the mortals and then had to find his way again as a human being. Jessica never lost her powers; she lost her way as a superhero, and had to find a way to make herself a whole person again. And Walker lost his way as a superhero from the biggest win while she lost hers from the biggest defeat that a superhero could be given outside of being murdered.”



her into the Marvel Universe, and find her place in it, and be so reverential that she feels right at home at the same time.”

Indeed, Bendis ended up teaming Jessica with erstwhile Power Man, Luke Cage. “That was a matter of figuring out, ‘If Jessica is down here at this lower level of the Marvel Universe, who would she be hanging around and having run-ins with?’ Because she’s going to bump into Danny Rand (Iron Fist), Jessica Drew and Matt Murdock, as they would be her peer group,” explains Bendis. “Luke also had a run of bad luck for a while and pulled himself together. In my life, I’ve found that people who have been through similar situations end up gravitating towards each other, even though it’s not necessarily obvious why they’re

GOD!
FUCKING...
SHIT OF ALL
SHIT!

I CAN
MULTITASK

Living with Luke Cage
means never having
to carry boxes.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

Bendis on the other Netflix shows

Daredevil owes much to your stint on the book with Alex Maleev, and you are also largely responsible for making Luke Cage a significant character again...

→ I didn't create Daredevil and I certainly stood on the shoulders of creators like Frank Miller and Klaus Janson. I'm proud that we didn't rip them off as we did our own thing, so when I see things on the show that were literally shots from our work, I'm flattered. If anything, I'm just a part of the DNA stew of that show.

You can't imagine Diana Prince saying that.

WHO
ARE YOU
WITH?

WHAT?

WHO ARE
YOU WITH,
THE
KREE OR THE
SKRULL?

WHAT?!

WHO SENT
YOU TO FUCK
UP MY LIFE
AGAIN?!!

What do you make of the casting of Mike Colter as Luke Cage?

→ It's astonishing. That was one where I was like, "How are they going to pull that off?" In my opinion, his casting is as prominent a home run as Robert Downey Jr was as Iron Man.

Along with Agent Carter, Jessica Jones is another female-led Marvel television series...

→ Not to pat myself on the back but Quake (Skye) is such a major part of *Agents Of SHIELD* now, and Maria Hill is such a big part of the cinematic universe, so I'm very happy to have contributed these strong females to the Marvel cinematic landscape.



Anger is
an energy.

so connected. I had written her origin storyline – which was the last storyline – first, without showing it to anybody. I knew where Luke landed in that story, so it was easy to open the first issue with them having a falling out and then trying to see if they could build something back up."

If that wasn't enough, Bendis presented the often-tempestuous partners with their toughest challenge yet in the form of a baby. "Jessica had gotten to a place where she had healed and gotten over the big one that had knocked her out," says Bendis. "Around that time, my wife got pregnant even though the doctors told her that she couldn't. Anybody who has been through a pregnancy, even if it isn't a troubled one, knows that it's very scary. You realise that no matter how self-involved or self-loathing you are, you have to stop that shit because there's this little thing that needs you. So *Alias* was filled to the brim with my neurosis about that, as I just projected it onto Luke and Jessica."

With *Alias* coming to a natural conclusion in early 2004, Jessica's next move was to become a superhero correspondent for the *Daily Bugle* in *The Pulse*, during which time she also gave birth. With both her and Luke playing pivotal roles in 2006's *Civil War* event storyline, Jessica's career then turned full circle as she joined the ranks of the Avengers. "I just love second chances and comebacks," laughs Bendis. "I thought, 'If we can write Luke and Jessica as a couple and put a

baby in their hands, putting them in Avengers Mansion and having them still be themselves would be fascinating.' There's a sense with Luke and Jessica that even after all these years, anything can happen to them. It could all go to hell at any minute because they're both wired for that to happen and they're in a very dangerous place. But they still have to live their life and try and build something together." ●

DC SUPERHEROES ON TV





DC SUPERHEROES ON TV

INTO THE MULTIVERSE

DC's comic-book champions are taking over television.

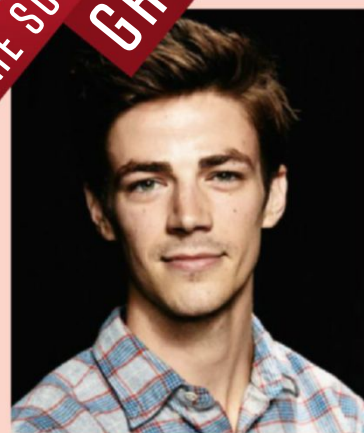
Joseph McCabe enters the infinite worlds of the DCTVU

Grant Gustin is still faster than a racehorse on Red Bull.

Jay Garrick (Reddy Seals): a blast from the past.

Detective Joe West (Jesse L. Martin) won't have those arms folded for long.

THE SCARLET SPEEDSTER!
GRANT GUSTIN



Barry Allen races into a second season of *The Flash*...

How comfortable now is Barry being the Flash?

★ Barry had gotten a lot more comfortable being the hero by the end of season one. Things have kind of been flipped on their head for season two. He's gonna have to find his confidence again, and there's gonna be a new mentor that's gonna help instill confidence in Barry again, and take his powers to a level that they had never been at in season one. Barry's gonna do something with his powers that he's never done before.

Apparently we'll see his former mentor Harrison Wells (aka the Reverse-Flash) once more.

★ There won't just be multiple timelines, there will be multiple earths, a multiverse. The fact that Wells is on the show and alive in some world doesn't necessarily mean that it's Barry's world. They will interact at some point, but I don't know if it's necessarily gonna be on Earth 1 or Earth 2. I'm saying those words right now but I shouldn't be [laughs].

Are there any particular DC characters you would like to see on *The Flash*?

★ I know Flash will appear on *Legends Of Tomorrow* and *Arrow*. And I know some of those characters will appear on *Flash* and *Arrow* as well. I like working with Brandon [Routh], just because he's fun, and I want to do more with Flash and Atom. I like their dynamic, and I personally just like working with Brandon.

Joseph McCabe

The word infinite is

inseparable from the DC Universe. It describes not only the number of worlds that exist within it, not only the number of characters that live on those worlds, but the sheer number of storytelling possibilities in our world's longest-running superhero mythology. With all of those possibilities, all that potential, fuelling its stories, it's no wonder that the number of TV series exploring the DC universe has exploded within just the last few years. From the breakout hit *Arrow* to last year's debut of *The Flash* to this year's *Supergirl* to 2016's *Legends Of Tomorrow*, the DC pantheon has conquered the small screen.

"I wrote a line the other day for Ray Palmer [aka the Atom]," Marc Guggenheim, executive producer of *Arrow* and *Legends*, tells *SFX*. "I'm not sure if it'll end up in an episode, but it was, 'Ten-year-old me is having a moment.' That pretty much is coming from me. Ten-year-old me can't believe this. It's insane. It is literally a dream come true."

A self-proclaimed lifelong fanboy, Guggenheim is currently working tirelessly on a fourth season of adventures for DC's brooding, battling Bowman, as played by Stephen Amell. While the show's first three years saw no end of misery for Oliver Queen – who returned home after a five-year-exile in order to avenge his father and save the soul of his beloved Starling City – the EP says season four will see some major changes, as well as new antagonist

Damien Darhk (Neal McDonough) and ally John Constantine (Matt Ryan).

"The big challenge for us, and it's a good challenge, is 'How do we create conflict and drama in the show in a way that we haven't in years past?' In years past, the conflict and drama came from Oliver's life going to shit. I'm not saying that bad stuff won't happen to Oliver this year, or people close to Oliver. We're not changing the show fundamentally. But we are finding new ways to create drama and create surprises that aren't just about that. Moments and scenes and episodes that would have been all about Oliver losing his shit on someone or Oliver falling into the depths of despair, those scenes we're not writing this year. The conflict and the drama is coming out of other things. That's good. It makes it feel like, not a completely different show, but Oliver maturing. The difference between season four and seasons one, two and three is in those seasons we were very consciously writing a character who had PTSD. All the drama got driven through that lens. And at the end of season three we were very clear with the characters and the audience that the man Oliver was is no longer the man he is now. He pretty much said that, and he's become a different person. So we're making good on all the promises that we made to the audience at the end of season three."

While the DC TV Universe's flagship hero is maturing, his younger brother-in-arms is experiencing some new growing pains.

GETTY (2)

THE MAID OF MIGHT! MELISSA BENOIST



Supergirl is ready to soar...

What's it like to enter this world?

★ It is a daunting thing. I feel a responsibility. There's so much I have yet to learn about the universe, but I am in the process. People have already been teaching me. I definitely want to do right by the fans. And I want to represent her in a way that makes everyone happy. The sheer vastness of it is a little scary. I'm a really big homebody. I'm a little shy. And putting myself out there on such a grand scale, that's pretty scary. But in a good way.

Have you spoken with any of the previous Supergirls to get any advice on filling the red boots?

★ I have spoken to Helen [Slater - Supergirl in the 1984 movie]. She is so sweet. I don't think she's ever lost Supergirl. She is a Supergirl. We talk about training, what she had to do. She was really lucky and got to do archery and horseback riding. She was in England, and I guess they think about working out differently than we do [laughs]. Because I'm getting my butt kicked.

Supergirl is a brighter hero than many we've seen lately. Is that something you keep in mind when you're shooting?

★ Of course. We want to stay on the hopeful, light, sunny side of this. Recently there's been a lot of dark, gritty superhero stories. That's awesome. Chris Nolan's *Batmans* are unbelievable. But there's also something really beautiful about positivity, and the really uplifting story of Supergirl.

Joseph McCabe

Calista Flockhart is now Supergirl's boss as well as Harrison Ford's wife!



Can Melissa Benoist prove the Super-cynics wrong?



Mehcad Brooks is Jimmy Olsen alongside Benoist's Kara Danvers.

Chronicling the life of Central City's Scarlet Speedster, aka forensics scientist Barry Allen (played by Grant Gustin) - who achieved his lifelong goal of catching the man who murdered his mother - *The Flash's* second season promises new metahuman heroes and villains as a result of its hero ripping open the multiverse in its first season's finale. Fans will be introduced to such characters as the "original" Flash, the Hermes-helmeted Jay Garrick, while getting return visits from favourites like Captain Cold.

"*Arrow's* amazing and huge and awesome, and *The Flash* is somehow bigger in scope," says executive producer Andrew Kreisberg, who also oversees *Supergirl*. "With *Arrow* you were juggling the Dark Knight vigilante with the Shakespearean family drama. With *Flash* we're juggling superheroes with all of this great father-son drama."

MORE AND MORE

Kreisberg tells SFX that with the ever-expanding DCTVU he and his writers function in part as mapmakers of the new multiverse.

"You can't help but do that," he says. "Especially now that *Flash* and *Arrow* are connected, and we have the crossovers with *Legends* and *Flash* and *Arrow*. We've been having writers from *Flash* work on *Legends* and writers from *Arrow* work on *Flash*. There's always somebody from another show in

somebody else's room. 'Oh wait, that's what we're doing over there.' Or, more importantly, not so much being a watchdog but saying, 'Oh my god, they're doing this? That means we could do that!'"

But while the landscape steadily expands, Kreisberg tells us that the focus remains on the characters at its heart.

"For us it's always about characters, and that's always how we approach it. Whether it's the Emerald Archer or the Scarlet Speedster or the Girl of Steel."

Created by Kreisberg's partner, executive producer Greg Berlanti, the third DC superhero show from this creative powerhouse debuts this autumn. "We don't want to write the same show twice," says Kreisberg. "With *Supergirl* [starring *Glee's* Melissa Benoist] there is much more romance than we've done in the past. And an opportunity for workplace comedy... *Supergirl* is about sisters, it's about mothers and daughters, and it's about finding your place in the world. In some ways it takes place in a little bit more of a real world than some of the other shows."

That "real world" is National City, in which Kara Danvers (born Kara Zor-El of Krypton, cousin to Earth's champion Superman) works for media mogul Cat Grant (Calista Flockhart), alongside former *Daily Planet* photographer James Olsen (*True Blood's* Mehcad Brooks).

In the US, *Arrow* and *Flash* are broadcast on the CW network, but *Supergirl* airs on CBS. So while producers Kreisberg and Berlanti →

Stephen Amell: a hootie you should definitely be afraid of.

Neal McDonough looking unhappy at the spelling of Damien Darhk.

Thera Queen, John Diggle, Laurel Lance, Felicity Smoak – we salute you.

THE EMERALD ARCHER!
STEPHEN AMELL

would like to see Kara fly over to Starling and Central City for a visit, they must first convince The Powers That Be. In the meantime, however, they're planning more *Arrow-Flash* crossovers (following last year's thrilling "Flash Vs Arrow" and "The Brave And The Bold"), and for Oliver and Barry to visit their latest creation, *Legends Of Tomorrow*.

HALL OF HEROES

Unlike the Justice League, with its roster of heroes, or the Suicide Squad, with its line-up of criminals, *Legends Of Tomorrow's* title team pairs good guys – *Arrow's* Atom (Brandon Routh) and White Canary (Caity Lotz), *Flash's* Firestorm (Victor Garber and Franz Drameh), newcomers Hawkgirl (Ciara Renée) and Hawkman (Falk Hentschel) – with villains Captain Cold (Wentworth Miller) and Heat Wave (Dominic Purcell). Their first half season, premiering early next year, sees them battling the immortal supervillain Vandal Savage.

"Here's a studio (Warner Brothers) and network (The CW) that we have a four-year-old relationship with," says Guggenheim, "and they showed an incredible amount of faith in us. The amount of money that they are putting towards this, just to get the cast assembled, is unprecedented... It would be a dream come true for me just to be watching the show."

"*Flash* introduced superpowers and special effects to the Berlanti-verse. It built on *Arrow*. What could we do that would actually build on *Flash*? Another single hero probably wasn't

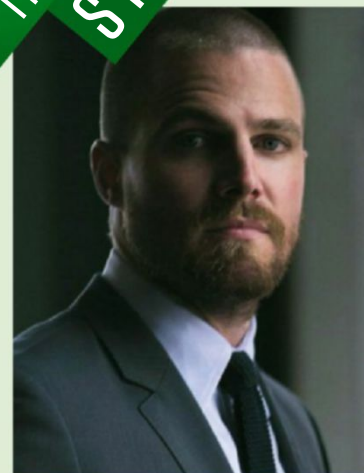
gonna get it done.

But when we looked at the landscape and we saw how many characters were introduced on both shows that could actually carry their own show we realised, 'What would really be cool – but they'll never let us do it – would be a team-up show.' Then to our shock and amazement they actually let us do it... What's really great is *Arrow* and *Flash* are continuing to introduce new characters, and every time they introduce a new character, that's a potential new teammate or antagonist or presence on *Legends Of Tomorrow*. That's part of the fun."

Since Warner Brothers is also developing DC's cinematic universe, SFX asks Guggenheim if there's a chance we might one day see our heroes' TV and film incarnations interact, in the spirit of such classic comic-book crossovers as *Crisis On Infinite Earths*.

"It's funny," he replies. "I really have two fanboy dreams. One was that I would see *Dark Knight Returns* on the big screen, and I feel like I'm very close to getting at least a good chunk of that [in *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice*]. My second dream is to see *Crisis On Infinite Earths* done on the big screen. It's certainly possible. Those sorts of things are made so far above my head that I just look at it as something that as a fan I'd love to see." ●

Arrow, The Flash and Supergirl air on Sky 1 in the UK. In the US, *Arrow* and *The Flash* are on the CW; *Supergirl* is on CBS.



After calling it quits last year, the Green Arrow again picks up his bow...

Are things finally looking up for Oliver?

★ Everyone dies in the first five minutes of the season premiere [laughs]. Ever since Slade Wilson walked into the Queen mansion, Oliver has been up against it and back. It was important that we went through that to get to where we are now. But going back there for the same reasons wouldn't be interesting. So whether or not there are dire circumstances in our show, Oliver, if he has to deal with them, is going to deal with them in a different way.

How does Oliver's life change?

★ Well, he can't be the Arrow. So if he's going to be a crimefighter/hero, he'll have to be something different. One of the things we lost by the midway point of season two and all of season three was the public persona of Oliver Queen. On the public persona side, people that are fans of the comics and the canon are going to be extremely excited with what we are doing in season four.

How big will this season get?

★ I've read three episodes so far, and all of them seem bigger than our finale last year. But there's a nice little element of magic, mysticism this year, that will also tie into Oliver's flashback story.

Joseph McCabe

REX (1)

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To Book

EMMA NEWMAN

The Brit novelist who's learning to enjoy life again after a tough year

Words by Jonathan Wright // Photography by Joby Sessions

Sometimes things are so bad you just have to hunker down, get through them whichever way you can.

It's not been the easiest of times for Emma Newman. "At the risk of sounding overly dramatic, I had the worst year of my life in 2014," she says.

She's not exaggerating. Not only did Newman have "major surgery" but complications followed that took her back into hospital.

"Just as I was getting back on my feet my mum was diagnosed with cancer," she continues. A month later, her best friend died unexpectedly, aged 41. "When Kate died, I feared I'd never be able to write anything again," she says. Then, a few months later, Newman had yet more surgery.

Somewhere in amongst all these traumas, though, there was some good news – albeit news delivered by Newman's agent on the day she also learnt her mother had cancer. ("Mum is doing brilliantly with an excellent prognosis.") Her new novel, *Planetfall*, had found a home with publishers Roc.

It's a book that may surprise those who know Newman via her *Split Worlds* urban fantasy sequence. It's an SF novel set "in a colony on a distant planet, established at the foot of an alien structure dubbed 'God's city'". The book focuses on Ren, "best friend of the colony founder", a man who disappeared 22 years previously.

"The book starts when a man bearing a striking resemblance to the founder stumbles out of the wilderness, half-starved and desperate for help," says Newman. "His arrival threatens the fragile stability of the colony and forces Ren to confront secrets she's hidden for many years."

BRANCHING OUT

This may seem a long way from tales of the Fae, but then again, as Newman tells it, she never really intended to be a fantasy novelist anyway. "I spent all of my adolescence and significant portions of my adult life only reading sci-fi," she says. "It's what I gravitate toward in film too. I have read a very small amount of fantasy in comparison."

In practice, the technical challenges of the genres aren't so different. "I think there are far more similarities than differences," Newman says. "For both, you have to introduce a world, and give the reader enough information at the right points for them to feel secure enough to enjoy and understand the plot and events as they unfold."

As she's already hinted, SF writers were formative influences in helping Newman build these skills. While she initially shies away from naming any SF novelists as heroes ("Maybe it's because I am an author now, and I know the

gulf between myself and my books..."), she unhesitatingly namechecks *The Sparrow* by Mary Doria Russell, *The Demolished Man* by Alfred Bester and *Prelude To Foundation* by Isaac Asimov as books she "could wax lyrical about".

And then she remembers she does have an SF writer hero, Ray Bradbury. "His book *Zen In The Art Of Writing: Essays On Creativity* is beautiful," she says. "I cried for about an hour when I learned of his death [in 2012]."

None of this means Newman is somehow finished with the *Split Worlds* novels. Eventually, she says, there will be five novels, but that there's been a delay between books three and four because of "circumstances beyond my control".

BATH IN MAY

Newman won't be drawn any further here, but she is happy to talk about her fictional universe invading present-day Bath for a live-action role-playing game in May 2016. "We've booked the Guildhall, which is simply the most perfect venue," she says. "The game focuses on a masked ball being held in Aquae Sulis, the secret mirror version of Bath."

One person who you'd guess may be there, schedule and finances allowing, is the Nine Worlds convention attendee who cosplayed as Cathy, introduced to readers in *Between Two Thorns*. "It was the most amazing moment to see one of my characters standing there in front of me," says Newman.

But wasn't it also a bit weird? "Yes, it is weird but utterly delightful," she says. "What's weird is spending so many years struggling to be published, then working so hard to get your book out into the world, and constantly worrying about whether you're doing the right things and working hard enough, and then suddenly having actual physical proof that someone else has fallen in love with a particular character to the extent that they have spent hours manifesting their version of that character in the real world."

In dealing with such moments, it probably helps that Newman is one of those writers who's a fan herself, host of the Hugo-nominated *Tea And Jeopardy* podcast, which finds her chatting with writers in a "secret tea lair" where the butler Latimer, aka Emma's husband and fellow SFF novelist Peter Newman (*The Vagrant*), serves refreshments.

The sheer joy the podcast takes in geekery is itself a delight – and perhaps a reminder to smile. "Sometimes things are so bad you just have to hunker down, get through them whichever way you can, and focus on the hope that things will get better," says Newman, reflecting again on hard times. "They have." ●

Planetfall is out now.

Biodata

Occupation

→ Novelist

Born

→ 1976

From

→ Penzance

Greatest Hits

→ The *Split Worlds* sequence so far features three novels: *Between Two Thorns*, *Any Other Name* and *All Is Fair*.

Random Fact

→ It puts no pressure on the Newman marriage that both Emma and Peter are writers: "It's wonderful being able to discuss everything with someone going through it too."



"I FEARED I'D
NEVER BE ABLE
TO WRITE
ANYTHING
AGAIN"



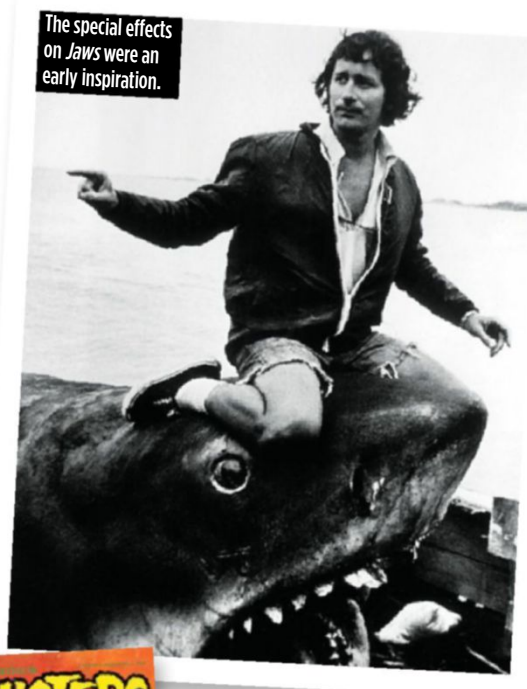
HEROES & INSPIRATIONS

GREG NICOTERO

The *Walking Dead*'s zombie master tells Stephen Kelly how horror shaped his life...

Portrait by Cindy Ord

Greg Nicotero is the unsung hero of your nightmares. Starting out as a special make-up effects artist on *Day Of The Dead*, he's built a 30-year career out of making movies live and breathe through prosthetics – especially horror. From the titular alien of *Predator* to the vampires of *From Dusk Till Dawn*, he's worked with some of the most terrifying monsters that the screen has ever unleashed. But his speciality is zombies, a skill-set he's currently putting to use as the co-executive producer, special make-up effects supervisor and occasional director of *The Walking Dead*. As the worldwide TV phenomenon continues its sixth series, he sits down with *SFX* to share just what informed this great, grisly CV...



CHILLER THEATRE

Along with *Famous Monsters*, I remember watching *Chiller Theatre* religiously, sitting there with a sketch pad. I was about eight years old, and I would sit, sketch and draw the monsters while I waited for the monster movies to come on. That was my first real memory.

JAWS

I think *Jaws* was probably “the one” that really piqued my interest in needing to know just how they made it. It was the first time that I realised there was a bunch of people who had to build a fake shark. It fired my brain into this ravenous desire to learn everything about how they made that movie. Back then, you didn't have the internet, so I would scour magazines. I started putting myself into the mindset of the technicians who have to build this shark, drive to Martha's Vineyard, put it in the ocean... And the first time they did it – it sank! So it became this fascination with the tremendous odds that these guys had to undertake to get to what we saw on camera. →

FAMOUS MONSTERS MAGAZINE

If you ask anyone around my age, *Famous Monsters* magazine created a generation of monster fans. It was filled with photos of different monsters and it had these amazing covers. Even the articles weren't really articles. It was mostly all puns like Horror-wood. And you could go to the back of *Famous Monsters* magazine and order the little Super 8 movies. That's when I became aware of Frankenstein and Dracula and Ray Harryhausen. Between *Sinbad* and *Jason And The Argonauts*, all these things hit me at the same time.



PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

If [make-up effects creator] Tom Savini hadn't lived 40 minutes away from me, I wouldn't be sitting here now. Because Tom and George Romero opened those doors for me, and allowed me to experience Hollywood in Pennsylvania, where I grew up. There was also a guy who lived in Pittsburgh called Bill

Cardille. On Saturday nights, he would play the host of an old horror show called *Chiller Theatre*, and run monster movies. And at a very, very young age, that's what I did on Saturday nights.



© GETTY (1), REX (1)



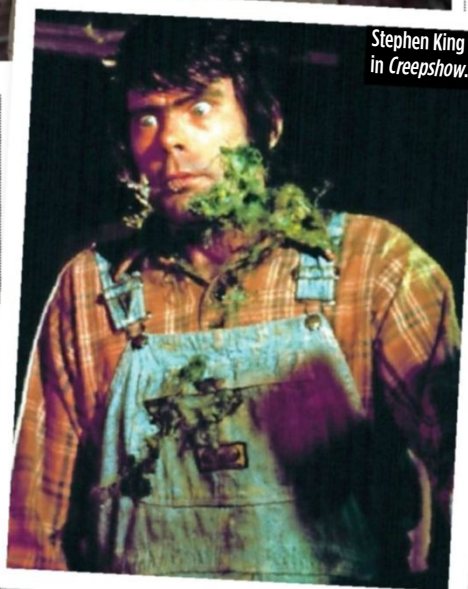
The Walking Dead contains many zombie tributes to classic films.

TOM SAVINI

☛ Tom Savini was the guy. *Dawn Of The Dead*, *Friday The 13th* – they were two movies that ushered in the “splatter era” of special effects. I became a fan of Tom based on the work on those movies. I remember getting fake ID for the first time I watched *Dawn Of The Dead*, and seeing the head explode, and seeing the zombie bite the woman in the neck. I almost vomited I was so horrified. But I couldn’t take my eyes off the screen. Then you flash forward to 1984 and I find out I’m working with him on *Day Of The Dead*. And he was the guy.

GEORGE ROMERO

☛ George gave me a lot of very interesting pieces of advice. We were shooting *Land Of The Dead*, and there’s a scene where a zombie is supposed to bite a girl in the face. We had it all set up but on action the girl started flailing her arms around – and right at the moment where the zombie bites the cheek off, her arm came up and covered it. I remembered being really disappointed. I wanted it to be perfect. And George saw the look on my face, and said, “Here’s something



Stephen King in *Creepshow*.

you should think about: it was real. That woman was struggling for her life and was punching for that creature. So the fact that the effect was blocked for a second or two doesn’t matter if in the reality of the situation that’s exactly what she would be doing – fighting for her life, struggling.”



Nicotero went from admiring Tom Savini films to working on them.



Maybe it’s time to start shopping at a different mall.

“I love that 13-year-old kids come up to me and say, ‘I wanna do what you do!’”

PRACTICAL EFFECTS

☛ I consider myself very fortunate that I was around right at the time of *Jaws* and the mechanical effects of ’75; then *Dawn Of The Dead* in ’77; then in 1980, *American Werewolf In London* – this explosion of special effects. I felt like I was right there watching these milestone moments. I felt like I was part of it. I ended up becoming part of it! I feel like nowadays that experience doesn’t exist. Because everyone knows, “Oh, it’s a computer.” The whole idea of transforming Linda Blair in *The Exorcist* – those questions don’t pop up into people’s minds anymore, because the curtains have been pulled back. It was a critical time too for guys like Quentin Tarantino, Robert Rodriguez and Guillermo del Toro, who was a make-up effects guy as well. I think we all grew up in the same alien pod when we were young. I think the fact that *The Walking Dead* celebrates all practical zombie make-ups also has invigorated a new generation of people who embrace that. I love that I have 13-year-old kids who come up to me and say, “I wanna do what you do!”

SCREEN ZOMBIES

☛ I put tribute zombies into *The Walking Dead* a lot, which are my little payback to the genre. It’s something I’ve done quite a bit. There are zombies that have been in *Dawn Of The Dead*. Even Peter Cushing’s zombie from *Tales From The Crypt* got in there! So I do get a chance to do a lot of stuff like that.

STEPHEN KING

☛ He is the one author in my life where I’ve read everything of his when it came out. I got to meet him and work with him when we were shooting *Creepshow 2*. He was writing a book then, and he would crumple up pages he was writing, and throw them away. I went into his trailer, took a piece out of the trash and kept it. And then I realised it was *Misery*! Years later I would work on the movie version of that book, and I showed him the old piece of paper that I took. It was kind of fun to be that kid and go, “Ooh, he’s writing something!”

The Walking Dead is on Fox on Monday nights in the UK. It airs on AMC in the US.

REX (3)



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 *GUESTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE



Oh we do like to geek beside the seaside!

VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN

MONST DEEDS

ROUS

It's alive! **FRANKENSTEIN** returns – with a bromantic twist. Nick Setchfield meets the monster makers...

Frankenstein! It's the greatest name in horror. Go on, roll it around your tongue. Feel the power of lightning in every last, corpse-bothering syllable. Frankenstein! It's alive with electricity, isn't it? Enough iconic voltage to reanimate a heap of stolen, stitched-together body parts. But it's also a name that needs to be reclaimed, returned to its rightful owner – even if that's an obsessed, grave-robbing sociopath with a nasty sideline in daring to be God...

"People say Frankenstein's the monster and it's not, it's the man," says director Paul McGuigan, pointing out the greatest fallacy in horror. "We've given Victor Frankenstein back his name."

This latest take on Mary Shelley's enduring fable of mad science shifts the focus from →

creature to creator. With a screenplay by *Chronicle*'s Max Landis, *Victor Frankenstein* maps the friendship between the title character and his hunchbacked aide, Igor. Think of it as a bodysnatching bromance. Think of it, if you must, as *Frankenstein Begins*.

"It wasn't a horror movie I was making here," McGuigan tells *SFX*. "It's about the relationship between two young men and that's what I was keen to play. These men are scientists who happen to make monsters."

"This is the beginning of the story that everyone is familiar with. Our story actually ends where the story normally begins. We create a monster at the end of the film. We still get the monster at the end – it's still a very exciting last third – but that isn't our movie."

STOOPED INTERLOPER

Don't look for Igor in the pages of Shelley's high gothic masterpiece. The crookbacked lab assistant is strictly a cinematic fixture. But then neither Landis or McGuigan set out to bring that 1818 novel to the screen. The first page of the screenplay bore the words "Frankenstein – based on (the pop-culture zeitgeist interpretation of) Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*."

"That's the kind of thing Max Landis would say!" laughs McGuigan, whose movie aims to synthesise visions of Frankenstein from James Whale to Mel Brooks while bringing a contemporary insight to the friendship at its heart. "He cherry-picked all the good ideas from all the Frankenstein movies as well as Mary Shelley's book and he made up this whole backstory of who Victor Frankenstein was and how he and Igor met. After reading that script it felt like *The Social Network* or something!"

McGuigan has form when it comes to immortal literary figures. He made his name on the big screen with *Gangster Number 1* and *Lucky Number Slevin* but also launched *Sherlock*, stamping Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss's update of the Baker Street sleuth with a distinctive visual stamp. He tells *SFX* he wasn't remotely daunted by the prospect of tackling this equally much-told tale.

"I was excited to take hold of it," he shares. "When I did *Sherlock* people would ask 'Why do Sherlock Holmes? It's been done a hundred



"I'VE NEVER SEEN FRANKENSTEIN AS A HORROR STORY!"

JAMES McAVOY is Victor Frankenstein

What makes this story so compelling that it's been told so many times?

→ It's about man taking the place of God and it's about our fear and our fascination and our need as a race to grasp technological advancement. We are amazed and we're fascinated by it and we need it and yet we're also desperately scared of it all the time.

You enjoyed rocking the '70s gear in *X-Men: Days Of Future Past*. Did you have as much fun with the Victorian gear?

→ Yeah, I love it! If you've got a coat with a big long tail you're going to swish it. If you've got a top hat you're going to flick it. Totally. I love period costumes. Not so much the '80s costumes that I just wore in [*X-Men*] *Apocalypse*... but nearly every other decade I seem to dig.

Do you have a favourite Victor Frankenstein from cinema history?

→ Never watched a Frankenstein movie, ever. That's terrible, isn't it? I've seen bits and bobs but I've never sat down and watched one.

Was there a formative horror movie from your childhood?

→ *Ghoulies*. *Ghoulies* was really scary. *Evil Dead* was brilliant, funny and terrifying. And I remember a horror movie that really stuck with me. It was a werewolf movie – *Ginger Snaps*. But I've never seen *Frankenstein* as a horror story. It's always been an existential crisis story for me. And this isn't a horror story either. For me this is a romp. This is a big old adventure with some ethical complexity. PG-13! Look out for scenes of ethical complexity!



Note the lack of "Victor" on the clapperboard!



Making a monster looks like a job for a lot of people.

“I ALREADY HAD MARTY FELDMAN IN MY HEAD!”

DANIEL RADCLIFFE is Igor

What does Max Landis bring to this as a writer?

→ He brings his voice and his take on things, which is incredibly, unashamedly entertaining and fast. The script goes at the pace his mind goes. And he has this ability to write incredibly verbose, highly intelligent, eccentric characters but also give them real heart. He understands that it's not okay just to have cool, zany characters – you have to care about them. For somebody who's part of the younger group of writers and is very cool and edgy there's a real earnestness to his writing, a real sincerity.

Did you go back and watch the classic *Frankenstein* movies?

→ I didn't particularly. I've been told for like a long time that I'm not a good mimic, and that it's my tendency to mimic things. I already had Marty Feldman in my head! If we were doing a comedy *Frankenstein* or a straight-up horror *Frankenstein* I think I would have felt more compelled to watch those and incorporate more of that into what I was doing. I didn't want to be second-guessing my choices because god knows I do that enough anyway.

Igor's a hunchback – was it tough to create that kind of physicality?

→ It had to be painful and it had to look like it was real. Most of the scenes I did like that were 30 seconds to a minute and a half long but there was one scene that was like four and a half minutes long – when you're walking around like that it gets really very sore, very quickly. After the four minutes were over James slammed me into a pillar and I was so fucking grateful to be slammed into a pillar! Yes! Good! Take me out of this godawful position I chose for myself!



Paul McGuigan: not in costume.



Some filming took place at Dunnottar Castle in Aberdeenshire.



Andrew Scott about to do to Victor what he did to himself in *Sherlock*?

“This is the beginning of the story that everyone is familiar with”

times before!’ And then suddenly it comes out and they go, ‘Oh, okay... I understand.’ Max Landis had something new within his script that I liked, which was the bond between these two men.

“Igor was a contrivance of cinema, this weird character who's a hunchback and who'll do anything for the mad scientist because he's crazy as well. In a way those characters were very much a reflection of what Hollywood at that time thought science was like. So we've taken them back and realigned this whole relationship. We've actually given Igor a voice. And to give Igor a voice allows us to see Victor Frankenstein for the first time.”

Igor's played by former boy wizard Daniel Radcliffe, carving a niche as a modern horror icon following turns in *Horns* and *The Woman In Black*. “Daniel brings a heart,” says McGuigan. “He brings a voice to a character who's never had one before. He's a bit like Watson to Sherlock. We see Victor through his eyes.”

WEIRD SCIENCE

Radcliffe's paired with *X-Men* franchise star James McAvoy, cast as the obsessive creature maker who's out to challenge death itself. “James is just full of energy and flamboyance. He will never just walk in a room. He'll always think of another way to come through that door. He'll run, he'll batter down the door, he'll come in sideways. Victor Frankenstein is a sociopath. He doesn't like people very much and that's hard to watch if you don't colour that with some kind of energy and eccentricity. You need someone who you want to watch on

screen and James is a person you want to keep watching despite yourself, even if you don't know if you like the character or not.”

And then there's Victor's monstrous creation itself. Every big-screen incarnation of the Creature inevitably lives in the lurching, flat-skulled shadow of Karloff but McGuigan's take doesn't run from that comparison. In fact the man who reinvented *Sherlock* insisted he embrace it, neck-bolts and all.

“I spoke with Steven Moffat about it,” McGuigan recalls. “I told him I was going to do this movie and he said, ‘Promise me one thing – don't fuck with the monster!’ And I know what he means. It's so good. Why fuck with it?”

“I was so glad that Steven said that because it really resonated with me. People were endlessly sending me sketches of how they thought the monster should look. I kept saying, ‘No, no – I want it more like Boris Karloff!’ People thought that was a bit strange but it was the best piece of advice I had. It made sense because a lot of these other *Frankenstein* movies try to reinvent the wheel too much. Sometimes it's best to leave it be. We went okay, this is our template and we'll make our version of it. It still has the same silhouette. We have bolts on the neck but they don't stick out as much. And we had the flat head because we could.”

McGuigan laughs, realising he's a creative soulmate to Mary Shelley's monster maker. “In the film someone asks Victor, ‘Why design it this way?’ And he says, ‘Because I could’. I'm a bit of a Victor Frankenstein myself that way.”

Victor Frankenstein opens on 3 December.

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JAN
2016

edited by Ian Berriman

Reviews

CINEMA 92

HOME ENTERTAINMENT 96

BOOKS 108

COMICS 116

GAMES & STUFF 118

COLLECTABLES 120

92

CRIMSON PEAK

Guillermo
goes gothic



THIS ISSUE

64

REVIEWS

Highlights



94

SPECTRE

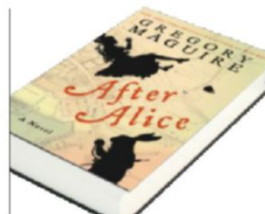
→ For the first time since 1971, the evil organisation is back! But was it worth the wait?



96

INSIDE
OUT

→ Pixar's latest takes us into the workings of a young girl's mind.



108

AFTER
ALICE

→ Is Gregory Maguire's sequel to Lewis Carroll well wicked?

→ RATINGS EXPLAINED ★★★★★ SUPERB ★★★★★ GOOD ★★★★★ AVERAGE ★★★★★ POOR ★★★★★ TERRIBLE

CRIMSON PEAK

Bloody romantic



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

15 | 112 minutes

▶ Director Guillermo del Toro

▶ Cast Mia Wasikowska, Tom Hiddleston, Jessica Chastain, Charlie Hunnam, Jim Beaver, Burn Gorman

“It’s not a ghost story,”

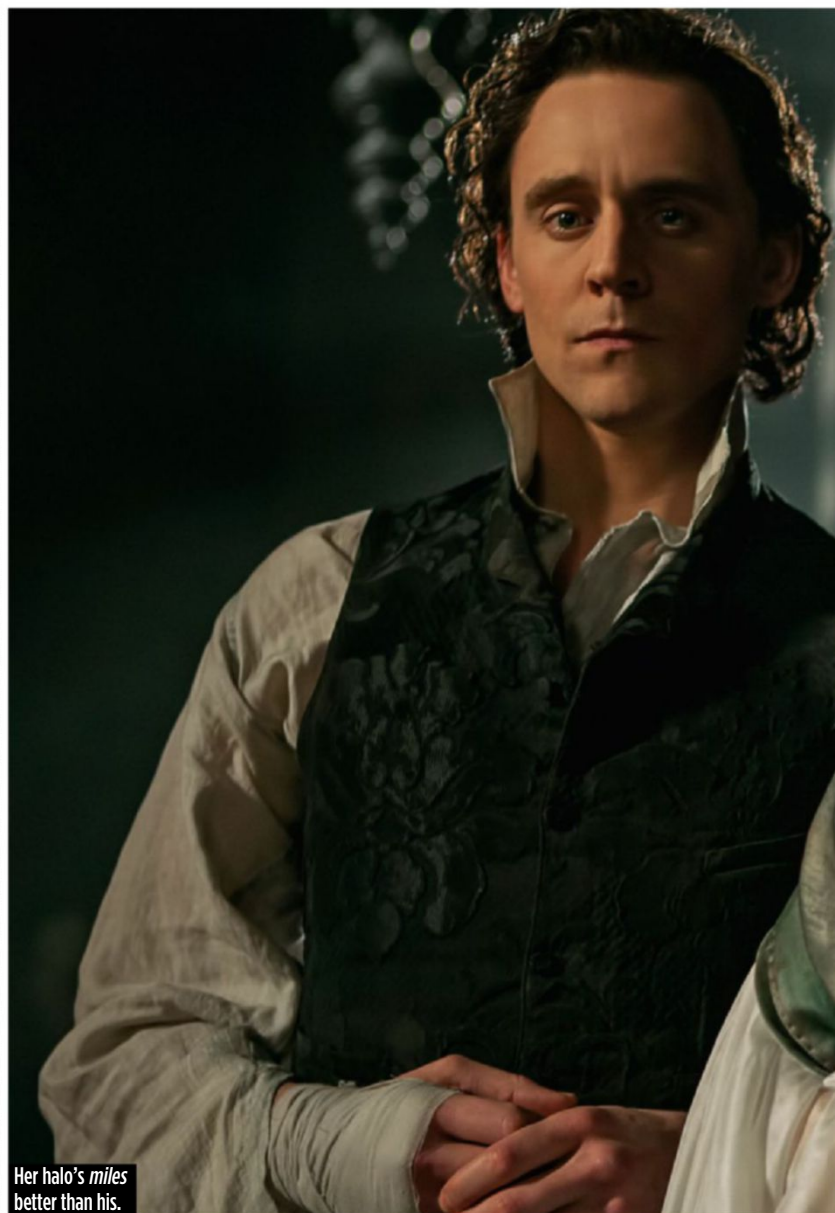
protests Mia Wasikowska’s Edith Cushing, early on in *Crimson Peak*. “It’s a story with ghosts in it.” She’s trying to persuade a doubtful publisher to take a punt on her debut novel, imagining herself the next Mary Shelley. But she’s also speaking for director Guillermo del Toro, because although *Crimson Peak* is a story with ghosts in it, it isn’t exactly a ghost story. It’s a sumptuous gothic romance where ghosts might be real, but they’re also just a metaphor.

The bare bones of the plot are pretty typical for genre fare. At the dawn of the 20th century, wannabe author Edith is swept off her feet by a brooding (and impoverished) nobleman. After marrying the sad-eyed Sir Thomas Sharpe (Tom Hiddleston), she’s whisked away to his ancestral home in England – but Allerdale Hall, known as Crimson Peak

because of the blood-red clay it’s built on, is as full of secrets as it is cobwebs. Stranded there alone with her new husband and his over-protective sister Lucille (Jessica Chastain), Edith will need to do a lot of creeping around by candlelight if she wants to put the Hall’s ghosts to rest.

Del Toro’s influences are easy to pick out: there are hat-tips to *Rebecca*, Hammer Horror, Edgar Allan Poe, and more than a passing nod to Shirley Jackson. There are so many homages packed in, in fact, that the film should probably come with a recommended reading list. But though the reference points are obvious, *Crimson Peak* is pure del Toro. Like *Pacific Rim*, it’s a love letter to the past that’s never less than respectful, even as it veers off in new directions. And like his Spanish language horrors, it pits supernatural terrors against human evils, ultimately finding the latter far more disturbing.

As viewers, we’re let in on most of the film’s twists and turns early on; we know, even if Edith doesn’t, that she’s being lured into a trap. We’d know anyway, just because of the kind of story it is, but del Toro



Her halo’s miles better than his.

Just wait till TripAdvisor hears about this.



wisely makes it clear from the start that Thomas and Lucille are up to something. From the colour-coded costumes to the dated screenwipes to the portentous dialogue, there’s no subtlety to anything here; everything is stuffed to bursting point with significance, so all the audience has to do is sit back and enjoy it.

And there’s so much to enjoy. All three of the main actors attack their roles with gusto, as if breathing new life into gothic archetypes is the greatest possible treat. Wasikowska gives Edith intelligence and ballsiness; she’s a

“All three of the main actors attack their roles with gusto”

wilful heroine in the *Jane Eyre* mould, though if she’d married Mr Rochester she would have marched him straight up to the attic and demanded to know what he was playing at. Hiddleston



makes Thomas an irresistible mixture of vulnerability and menace, all slinky, spidery sexiness, while Chastain is a terror, so intense you can barely take your eyes off her any time she's on screen.

Then there's the house itself. It's both beautiful and repulsive; a delirious confection of a set where gilded wallpaper is studded with dead insects and scarlet mud oozes up from beneath every floorboard. Even the ghosts match the décor, dripping bloody ectoplasm onto the carpets before vanishing into the walls. As much

fun as the actors seem to have been having, the design team must have had more. There's so much going on in every single frame that it's almost overkill, and if there was even a whiff of irony about any of it, it wouldn't have worked. A single wink to the audience and the whole thing could've crashed down into a heap of ridiculousness, but del Toro keeps a straight face, and the sheer force of his conviction sells it.

It's clearly a labour of love, this film. It's got a couple of scary bits, and even some extreme, watch-through-your-fingers violence, but

even in its darkest moments, it's beautiful. The spookier it gets, the cosier it feels, as if someone's beckoning you in to tell you a story – one that's been repeated so many times that all its rough edges have been smoothed away. It's even got a (kind of) happy ending. Perversely comforting, *Crimson Peak* is as warm as Allerdale Hall is cold. As decadent and velvety-soft as a sofa crammed with giant, elaborately tasselled cushions, this is a film to luxuriate in. **Sarah Dobbs**

i In the portrait of Mother Sharpe, she has the same cameo orphanage administrator Carmen wore in *The Devil's Backbone*.



JESSICA CHASTAIN

Lucille Sharpe in *Crimson Peak*



Lucille is such an interesting character...

→ She's a woman that's deeply rooted in the past. And she's not able to move forward from whatever scars... For Lucille, to leave Allerdale Hall or to be away from her brother equals death.

Lucille's gowns are immaculate. Did they help to put you into the right mindset?

→ Yes. Guillermo gave us each a biography. So I have secrets about her that Thomas Sharpe doesn't know; only Guillermo and I know what happened to her when she was 16. But in that biography was her likes and dislikes. She liked tight, restrictive clothing. I saw it like a baby that is a bit out of control until it's swaddled, and then it calms down. If she doesn't confine herself, she's this uncontrollable nerve.

Did the character linger with you afterwards?

→ I got depressed. The sadness that this character has is so immense. And I'd be wearing seven-inch platforms and really tight corsets and a wig that went down to my feet. I was always in physical and emotional pain. So when I finished, I needed to just sit in the sun and be with my loved ones and feel happy again. **Jamie Graham**

GETTY (3)

CINEMA

SPECTRE

Yesterday Never Dies



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

12A | 148 minutes

▶ Director Sam Mendes

▶ Cast Daniel Craig, Léa Seydoux, Christoph Waltz, Monica Bellucci, Ralph Fiennes, Ben Whishaw

🍷 Sweet, merciful Broccoli!

James Bond's signature gunbarrel sequence is back at the beginning of the movie. For some, a minor creative decision. For others, an essential part of the Bond ritual, the pulsing white dot in the darkness that promises rather than completes two plus hours of high-glamour mayhem. It's a clear signal that *SPECTRE* is chasing a style as classic, as trad, as 007's bespoke Jermyn Street shirts.

The 24th film in the superspy franchise plays as a perfect hybrid of vintage Bond panache and

Daniel Craig-era grit. There are overfamiliar echoes of *Skyfall* in its Whitehall politicking – MI6 faces “the biggest shake-up in the history of British Intelligence” and there's talk, again, of Bond being a relic – but there's a grander sweep to director Sam Mendes's encore, an even greater willingness to engage with the franchise's legacy, even the parts long ago kidnapped by parodists and spoof-merchants.

Adored clichés are dusted down with glee: brutal fights on luxury trains, sinister lairs in astonishing geographical locations, a gadget-laden dream car. There's a glorious moment during a thrilling nocturnal chase around Rome that has an unapologetic touch of the Roger Moores, stopping just short of a Union Jack parachute.

Craig embraces the slyer, dryer tone – he's never been more

dapper, more insouciant – but he also nails Bond's alternating currents of light and dark, cynically seducing a widow (Monica Bellucci, hideously underused) while chivalrously protecting the daughter of an old enemy (Léa Seydoux, bringing intensity and fragility to a Bond girl with rare psychological depth).

SPECTRE, self-evidently, also reactivates Bond's most archetypal menace, unseen for decades. All shadows, suits and summary executions, they've updated their operation to include counterfeit pharmaceuticals and human trafficking. Christoph Waltz is silky and smiley as their head, Franz Oberhauser, a man whose masterplan trades on Snowden-era paranoia over intelligence gathering, a threat possibly a touch too conceptual for a film evoking the glory days of orbital lasers.

Mendes gives a romantic shimmer to Bond's world, transporting us from a macabre

“There's a heart beneath the shoulder holster”

street festival in Mexico to vertiginous Austrian peaks to the sun-bleached souks of Tangier. A shot of a vintage Rolls traversing an empty North African desert has an authentic Fleming weirdness. And, naturally, there's cinema-rattling action to spare, launching with an audacious pre-titles helicopter stunt.

But there's a heart beneath the shoulder holster. Completing the emotional journey begun in *Casino Royale*, *SPECTRE* is, ultimately, about saving the man, not the world; earning a licence to live, not kill. Craig's future may be uncertain but one thing we know: as much as the opening gunbarrel is a key part of Bond tradition so, too, is that final, indestructible promise: James Bond will return.

Nick Setchfield

i Look for the name on the safehouse door: it's a nod to Ian Fleming's *Playboy* short story “The Hildebrand Rarity”.



Maybe next time get a babysitter.

THE HALLOW

Into The Woods



▶ **RELEASED 13 NOVEMBER**

15 | 97 minutes

▶ Director Corin Hardy

▶ Cast Joseph Mawle, Bojana Novakovic, Michael Smiley

🍷 There's always an old book, isn't there? Any time people head out to an inadvisably remote location, there's always a dog-eared old book handy to explain to them why they really shouldn't have come. Here, it's a massive tome of Irish mythology that tips off tree surgeon Adam Hitchens (Joseph Mawle) and his family that it's not just their neighbours who resent their presence.

The friction between city types and a rural community is nothing new in horror, and neither is the idea of a family in peril in their own home. But *The Hallow* stands out by being relentlessly terrifying. Right from the beginning, it's obvious something's afoot, and by the halfway mark the monster's shown its face. From then on, it's one breathlessly scary supernatural encounter after another. There's no messing about, and though a possible scientific explanation is mooted, it's soon brushed aside in the face of the monsters.

Okay, maybe not enough time is spent on developing the main characters, but they're well-sketched enough that the final reel's difficult decisions feel legitimately gut-wrenching. *The Hallow* might be an Irish fairytale, but it's not one you'd want to read at bedtime.

Sarah Dobbs

i Corin Hardy bagged himself a job directing the reboot of *The Crow* off the back of a rough cut of this movie.



Do not throw a snowball at this man.



Guess which one isn't a scout.

SCOUTS GUIDE TO THE ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE

Ging Gang Gory



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

15 | 93 minutes

▶ Director Christopher Landon
▶ Cast Tye Sheridan, Logan Miller, Joey Morgan, Sarah Dumont, David Koechner

❖ **This horror-comedy** has plenty of zip and a likeable lead, but it's all been done before – except the filthy bits. And perhaps they shouldn't have been done at all.

Ben (Tye Sheridan) finds his interest in boyscouting waning as scouting for ladies becomes more of a pressing concern. Wingman Carter wants to party instead of accompanying super-keen Augie on a camp-out. But when they sneak off, a zombie outbreak forces them to try and save the town with the help of Denise, a stripper with – yep – a heart of gold.

Playing like a very late-franchise *American Pie*, *Scouts* has its funny moments, but it's largely ass gags, CGI gore, and the creepy assertion that male friendship's golden but all women are slags. There's a mean cunnilingus scene, and Carter gropes a zombie's breasts, reasoning, "I just wanted to see some titties!" It's like watching three different films: one sleazy, one sweet, one mildly amusing. Perhaps Carter's line, "It was fun when we were kids but we have to grow up, man!" should serve as the last word. **Matt Glasby**

i DJ/electro producer Dillon Francis has a cameo as one of the zombies – and gets his head blown off.



Vin carried his pool cue everywhere.

THE LAST WITCH HUNTER

Vin Diesel rolls a one



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

12A | 106 minutes

▶ Director Breck Eisner
▶ Cast Vin Diesel, Michael Caine, Elijah Wood, Rose Leslie, Rena Owen

❖ **Vin Diesel makes his first** foray into fantasy filmmaking with *The Last Witch Hunter*, a film spawned from his love of Dungeons & Dragons. Given the end result, you rather wish Diesel was into Monopoly, Cluedo or Snakes & Ladders.

Directed by Breck Eisner, who last pitched up with the 2010 remake of George Romero's *The Crazies*, *The Last Witch Hunter* is a perfunctory scare-fest drowning in digital effects but entirely lacking in charisma. Diesel plays Kaulder, a medieval warrior cursed with immortality just as he vanquishes the pestilence-spreading Witch Queen.

Eight hundred years later, we're in modern-day New York, where Kaulder now spends his spare time seducing air hostesses. He's

also employed by a Witch Counsel to hunt down naughty necromancers who practice dark magic. When Kaulder's priest-advisor (Michael Caine) is left spell-stricken, he follows a trail that eventually suggests a plot to resurrect the Witch Queen. Along for the ride is Caine's well-meaning replacement (Elijah Wood) and a good witch named Chloe (*Game Of Thrones*' Rose Leslie), who spends her days running a gothy arts club.

As the story plods along, Eisner fills the screen with icky visuals, but rarely does anything get under the skin. Some ideas are promising, like a bakery feeding its patrons with maggot-riddled cakes, but never really developed. Dialogue is as wooden as a box of crucifixes, and the performances, bar a lively turn from *Misfits*/*This Is England*'s Joe Gilgun, are largely moribund. Let us prey this is a one-off. **James Mottram**

i Screenwriter Cory Goodman was inspired by talking to Diesel about his D&D character, Melkor – a name from *The Silmarillion*.



Mirrors: good for smearing with hands.

PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION

Diminished sixth



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

15 | 88 minutes

▶ Director Gregory Plotkin
▶ Cast Chris J Murray, Brit Shaw, Dan Gill, Ivy George

❖ **Even die-hard fans of the** *Paranormal Activity* franchise are likely to be disappointed by this lazy rehash.

This time we meet yet another family moving home. Discovering a box full of home videos of all the kids in the previous films, they begin to link the footage with the strange behaviour of creepy young daughter Leila.

The dialogue is expositional almost to the point of parody, and the bland unfolding of the story's mysteries rids the film of any suspense. For casual cinemagoers all this is likely to be mind-numbingly dull, while for devotees there aren't nearly enough answers to satisfy their desire to learn more about the mythology.

None of this would matter so much if the film was at all scary, but it relies entirely on banal jump scares that function only to startle you out of nodding off. A higher budget means more effects, but this mostly comprises of an unthreatening cloud of black dust floating around – a laughable attempt to justify a 3D release. Mercifully at least, this is (supposedly) the last in the series. **Stephen Puddicombe**

ALSO OUT *MOCKINGJAY PART 2* (19 Nov); *THE GOOD DINOSAUR* (27 Nov); *VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN* and *KRAMPUS* (4 Dec).

INSIDE OUT

The Emotion Picture

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

► RELEASED 23 NOVEMBER

2015 | U | Blu-ray 3D/Blu-ray/DVD

► Directors Pete Docter,

Ronnie Del Carmen

► Cast Amy Poehler, Phyllis Smith,

Kaitlyn Dias, Richard Kind,

Diane Lane, Lewis Black

Oh, Pixar, how we love you, even if you do break our hearts every time we watch one of your films. "I hoped that this would be emotional," says writer/director Pete Docter in his commentary, and he nailed it – about two-thirds into *Inside Out* you will be crying like you did at the start of *Up* or the end of *Toy Story 3*. Pixar seem to have a GPS location for our heartstrings, and they enjoy swinging on them so hard that one day they're sure to snap. Actually, did we say we love them? Make that hate. Bastards.

Still, it's not all snotty hankies: *Inside Out* is also wildly funny, with a glorious line in wit and snark; boasts imaginative, colourful visuals, including a spectacular, flat "2D" sequence – that's ironically more expensive than any other and contains fantastically relatable characters

and a genius central idea.

It's the story of Riley, who we follow from birth to 12 years old through the eyes of the emotions in her head: Joy, Sadness, Fear, Disgust and Rage. Watching her life unfold through a control room viewscreen in her brain, Joy (Amy Poehler, essentially channelling Lesley Knope from *Parks & Recreation* into a cartoon) is determined to keep Riley as happy as possible, but her plans are scuppered when Sadness (Phyllis Smith) loses her "core" memories – the ones that make Riley who she is. Embarking on a mission into the depths of Riley's brain to retrieve them, Joy and Sadness meet the kid's almost forgotten imaginary friend, Bing Bong (Richard Kind) and struggle to get back to their control room before Riley's life goes totally off the rails under the tutelage of Fear, Disgust and Rage.

As a metaphor for growing up, *Inside Out* is exquisite; we've all gone through it, and many of us have seen our kids go through it, too, and so there are layers of pathos here that resound on all levels, for both young and old viewers. Bubbly Joy is a sweet,



Joy and Sadness: but which is which?



"Someone get these slugs off me!"

hopeful hero – originally the character was called Optimism – and despite chattering away and bouncing like a puppy throughout the film, she's not irritating at all (according to Docter, originally she was even *more* cheerful, until test screenings gave them feedback that she was making people's teeth hurt).

Riley's external world is also enjoyable, with the interplay between her family feeling real and well-observed, and some of the tiny details are great fun – such as the fact that we get to look inside Mum and Dad's heads, too,

“As a metaphor for growing up, *Inside Out* is exquisite”

and discover that Mum's control room looks like a daytime talk show and Dad's resembles NORAD HQ.

But, as always seems to be the case with Pixar, for all the film's



exquisite detail and fine world-building, it's human emotions – including sadness – that make *Inside Out* strike such a chord. Your chin may wobble, yes, but that's because the writers have tapped into a basic human experience: growing up is hard to do.

• **Extras** Two short toons provide perfect accompaniment to the main feature. The adorable “Lava” tells of two Hawaiian volcanoes in love, while “Riley’s First Date?” continues on from *Inside Out* with a gorgeously funny vignette that focuses on her parents.

Both DVD and Blu-ray also have a commentary hosted by writer/directors Pete Docter and Ronnie Del Carmen. Sounding as though it's been meticulously planned out, it's an interesting listen, though possibly a little too technical at times. However, that's offset by moments that are enormous fun, such as the guys calling actor Bill Hader for a chat, or revealing concepts that didn't make it into the film (their idea to explain why brains forget people's names is too long to go into here, but it's absolute genius). There are also some lovely little insights, such as

the fact that the writers went to visit Hader on the set of *Saturday Night Live* – not just for a jolly, but to see how a working TV studio looks so they could use it for the Dream Production section of Riley's brain.

Buy one of the Blu-ray formats and you also get seven short featurettes on subjects such as the sound design, editing animation and “the women of *Inside Out*”, plus four deleted scenes and trailers. **Jayne Nelson**

i “Lava” was inspired by the music of Israel Kamakawiwo'ole, who is an icon in Hawaii.



ALL IN THE MIND

More peeks inside the human head



HERMAN'S HEAD

Like *Inside Out*, this '90s sitcom also personified human emotions – in this case, those of a guy working in publishing – with four characters representing sensitivity, lust, anxiety and logic constantly squabbling in an attic.



THE NUMSKULLS

This classic British comic strip – which debuted in *The Beezer* in 1962 – follows the tiny creatures in the head of a boy (a man, originally) who control his different senses.



EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT SEX...

The brain is depicted as a NASA-style mission control centre in Woody Allen's 1972 comedy. Allen himself is a nervous sperm!

OSMOSIS JONES

This 2001 meld of live-action and animation is set largely inside the body of a Bill Murray character. William Shatner voices the brain cell in charge of the City of Frank.



Protecting the globe: literally.

DRINKING GAME

Knock back a beverage of your choice every time...

-  Peggy has to hide her comings and goings from her strict boarding house landlady.
-  Agent Sousa is called Susan by one of his colleagues.
-  Jarvis's (unseen) wife gets a mention.
-  Dr Ivchenko/Fennhoff starts fingering his ring. (It's hypnosis, okay?)
-  One of Howard Stark's inventions does something it shouldn't.
-  Someone shows a photo of Steve Rogers or there's a clip from *Captain America: The First Avenger*.

AGENT CARTER

Season One

Peggy in the middle

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED 30 NOVEMBER**

2015 | 12 | Blu-ray/DVD

▶ Creators Christopher Markus,

Stephen McFeely

▶ Cast Hayley Atwell, James D'Arcy,

Chad Michael Murray, Enver Gjokaj,

Bridget Regan, Dominic Cooper

Spun off from a "One-Shot"

short on the *Iron Man 3* Blu-ray, *Agent Carter* is the '40s-set sequel *The First Avenger* never had – albeit one where Cap's very much on ice. It's a far more consistent, higher quality affair than its Marvel TV stablemate *Agents Of SHIELD*, the post-war setting giving its story the freedom to unfold without being at the mercy of massive, Hydra-shaped plot twists filtering down from the big screen.

It's still very much part of the MCU, however. The Strategic Scientific Reserve is basically *SHIELD: The Early Years*, investigating weird cases before Nick Fury even dreamt of his long leather coat; the fugitive Howard "Tony's dad" Stark and his inventions are effectively the show's McGuffin; and there are plenty of "did you spot?" nods to comic book continuity to keep Marvel fans happy.

At the same time, *Agent Carter* never gets hung up on being a prequel to present-day Marvel screen outings – aside from numerous mentions of the missing-in-action Steve Rogers, this is an Avenger-free zone. In fact, it's not so much a superhero drama as an espionage show,

owing as much to Bond as its big-screen Marvel stablemates. And with a short run of just eight instalments, the twisty arc plot is allowed to develop organically and at a decent pace – no need for filler episodes here.

The series also embraces its '40s setting, with stunning sets and costumes, a guest appearance for Rogers's old unit the Howling Commandos, and a fun running gag about a hokey radio adaptation of Cap's wartime adventures.

But the main reason the show works is Hayley Atwell as Agent Peggy Carter herself – one of Marvel's finest screen heroes to date. She's hard as nails, the cleverest person in every room she's in, has a knack for a sharp quip, and she's doing it all without

the hint of a superpower. Atwell is utterly plausible as a character whose wartime exploits alongside Cap have been forgotten in a sexist post-war SSR that believes female agents are just there to do the filing. Facing that, it's no wonder she goes extra-curricular to help clear the on-the-run Stark Sr, in the process forming a great double act with his butler-with-a-past Edwin Jarvis (James D'Arcy).

The season loses its way with a slightly too neat resolution and by overplaying Peggy's woman-in-a-man's-world situation – the sexism of her secret agent colleagues is sometimes too cartoonish and broad to be believable, diminishing the impact of the drama. But now that Peggy has found some closure with Cap, has finally earned the respect of her co-workers, and is moving to LA, season two looks set to be a corker.

▶ **Extras** Just a sub-three-minute blooper reel. **Richard Edwards**

i Ralph Brown's Dr Johann Fennhoff is Dr Faustus in the comics. He can be seen reading *Doctor Faustus* in one episode.



Gladys hated car rear lights.

THE GALLOWES

Not well hung

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ EXTRAS ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

▶ **RELEASED** 16 NOVEMBER

2015 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD

▶ Directors Travis Cluff, Chris Lofing

▶ Cast Reese Mishler, Pfeifer Brown, Ryan Shoos, Cassidy Gifford

❖ **Ever clicked through a** friend's increasingly wobbly gallery of Facebook photos after a messy night out? That's kind of what watching *The Gallows* feels like, right down to the feeling of queasy regret that sets in halfway through.

The set-up isn't unpromising, though it relies on all of its characters acting like morons. On the night before the school play, a gang of obnoxious teenagers break into the theatre to wreck the set, only to find themselves locked in with a vengeful ghost. "Charlie" died in a production of the same play two decades ago, which raises a number of questions – but after more than an hour of barely intelligible shakycam footage of people running around in the dark, you won't care about the answers.

It's hard to find anything *The Gallows* gets right: the acting is unconvincing, the pacing saggy, and the tension non-existent. The botched found-footage approach means you can't even see anything half the time. It's scary, really – not the film, but the fact that it got released.

❖ **Extras** The DVD has bloopers, deleted scenes, and a nine-minute featurette. The Blu-ray adds the directors' original (substantially different) cut, another featurette and trailers. **Sarah Dobbs**

i That original cut features several different scenes, a different ending, and a different actor playing one role.



Frank's stag night had been nothing if not eventful.

DOCTOR WHO: THE UNDERWATER MENACE

A fishy tale

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ EXTRAS ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

▶ **RELEASED** OUT NOW!

1967 | PG | DVD

▶ Director Julia Smith

▶ Cast Patrick Troughton, Anneke Wills, Michael Craze, Frazer Hines

❖ **Four years after its second** instalment was recovered, this long-overdue release finally gives fans the chance to see the Second Doctor's earliest extant episode. Set in Atlantis, it centres on the lunatic Professor Zaroff, who plans to blow up the world by draining away the oceans.

It's a delight to see more of Pat Troughton – who, three stories in, has nailed his incarnation's disarming innocence. But the actor's angry assessment of the script as "rubbish" is spot-on. Not one detail of this world convinces. That Zaroff's somehow built a nuclear reactor but – in a key plot point – hasn't mastered

refrigeration rather sums it up. With its daft-looking fish-people, bushy eyebrows (every male Atlantean is full-on Scorsese) and OTT villain (typical line: "I could feed you to my pet octopus!"), this preposterous romp is pure '50s B-movie. And yet... like the work of Ed Wood, it's so stupendously silly that it's rather good fun.

❖ **Extras** A five-person team provides commentary on the surviving episodes two and three: no one remembers much, so it's heavy on generalities, snark and banter. One and four are represented by audio and off-air photos. There's also a decent Making Of doc; a TV Centre piece which takes Peter Davison and two companions back to reminisce; two brief clips from the missing eps; and a gallery. **Ian Berriman**

i The seashell dresses worn by the Atlantean women were made by sewing novelty ashtrays onto a leotard.



The triplets couldn't get enough windows.

SECONDS

New Faces

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ EXTRAS ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

▶ **RELEASED** OUT NOW!

1966 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD (dual format)

▶ Director John Frankenheimer

▶ Cast Rock Hudson, Salome Jens, John Randolph, Will Geer, Jeff Corey

❖ **Another masterful exercise** in paranoia from the director of *The Manchurian Candidate*, *Seconds* places the male midlife crisis at the centre of a Kafkaesque nightmare.

John Randolph plays unfulfilled banker Arthur Hamilton... until the character's reborn in the shape of matinee idol Rock Hudson, after Hamilton turns to a secret organisation to give him a new life via radical plastic surgery.

Both an achingly sad personal story and a thriller that grips hard all the way to its haunting, gut-punch finale, *Seconds* interrogates the middle-aged fantasy of escape to a care-free, Dionysian existence, and warns us to be careful what we wish for. Hudson is particularly excellent, his diffident body language selling the illusion that both he and Randolph are playing the same man.

The real star of the show, however, is the crisp black-and-white cinematography of James Wong Howe, whose off-kilter angles and innovative use of Steadicam-predating harnesses are thrillingly, giddily disconcerting.

❖ **Extras** A 2002 commentary by Frankenheimer, plus a new one by a film scholar; Kim Newman discussing the film; a trailer; a booklet. **Ian Berriman**

i *Seconds* freaked out Beach Boy Brian Wilson so badly that he didn't go to the cinema again until *ET* in 1982.

HOME ENTERTAINMENT



"Help! I'm stuck in a draughts board!"

LFO

All About That Bass

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED 23 NOVEMBER**

2013 | 15 | DVD

▶ Director Antonio Tublén

▶ Cast Patrik Karlson, Izabella Jo Tschig, Per Löfberg, Ahnna Rasch

❖ **Nope, not the '90s techno** act. The acronym stands for the same thing – low-frequency oscillation – but rather than making dance music, the antihero of this low-key Swedish sci-fi uses his auditory expertise to manipulate the world around him. Driven almost mad with loneliness after the death of his wife and son, Robert (Patrik Karlson) devises a way to brainwash people using specific audio frequencies, and is soon running elaborate experiments on his neighbours.

With just four key cast members and a single location, *LFO* is a contained, claustrophobic film that forces you to spend a lot of time with a truly horrible character. Robert is detached, immoral, and yet chillingly believable. The mundanity of his demands – sex, yes, but also clean windows and proper waste disposal – creates some absurd humour, but every laugh is followed up with a nasty gut-punch.

The ending deserves both a trigger warning (for suicidal ideation, yikes) and a standing ovation for sheer ballsiness. You'd have to be careful who you recommended this film to, but it's so startlingly original and cruelly clever that when it finds its fans, they'll really love it.

❖ **Extras** Trailers. **Sarah Dobbs**

i *LFO* is packed with audio in-jokes; for example, Robert's online identity is "Dr Moog", after the synthesiser inventor.



Standards had slipped at The Ivy.

MIDWINTER OF THE SPIRIT Series One

Exorcise class

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2015 | 15 | DVD

▶ Director Richard Clark

▶ Cast Anna Maxwell Martin, David Threlfall, Oengus MacNamara, Nicholas Pinnock, Will Attenborough

❖ **There's been a deluge of** post-watershed supernatural dramas over the past few years, ranging from the sublime (*The Fades*) to the mediocre (*Remember Me*). Thankfully, due to the skilled stewardship of writer Stephen Volk (who has past form when it comes to this genre with *Ghostwatch* and the cancelled-too-soon *Afterlife*), *Midwinter Of The Spirit* manages to mark itself as a superior, and artfully unnerving adult drama.

Anna Maxwell Martin is breathlessly brilliant as Merrily Watkins, the reluctant Church of England exorcist, or "deliverance minister", who's pulled into a murder investigation with Satanic worship and child abuse connections. Watkins is the angsty

ecclesiastical hero of a dozen-novel run of supernatural thrillers by author Phil Rickman, and this three-part drama is a faithful, but tightened adaptation of the second in the series.

There are a few effective jump scares (most of which include child abuser Denzil Joy) and some pleasingly chilling supporting turns – Siobhan Finneran, as well-groomed diabolist Angela, glides from empathic and benign to cold-eyed menace in the twitch of an eye. In lesser hands this could have been a fatally overcranked production, but Volk and director Richard Clark keep everything emotionally grounded.

There's no word yet on whether ITV are planning more adventures for Merrily Watkins, but given the multi-book source material, there are plenty more stories ripe for the small-screen treatment. Don't let this stay a one-off, ITV.

❖ **Extras** None. **Steve O'Brien**

i When Rickman's series was last optioned it clashed with 2008's *Apparitions*. "Nobody wanted to touch exorcists after that."



Ronnie O'Sullivan was on next.

THE SKULL

All Marquis-ed up

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

1965 | 12 | Blu-ray/DVD (dual format)

▶ Director Freddie Francis

▶ Cast Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee, Jill Bennett, Patrick Wymark

❖ **"Stay away from the skull** of the Marquis De Sade!" As rules to live by go, it's a good one, up there with "never mix beer and wine". Unwisely, occult collector Christopher Maitland pays no mind. Falling under its malefic influence, he's driven to kill – though not to partake of anything pervy, thank god. No one wants to see Peter Cushing's orgasm face.

Presented with a 53-page screenplay, director Freddie Francis turned a pig's ear into if not a silk purse then at least a serviceable wallet, enlivening a rote script with visual flair. A dream sequence which sees Maitland hauled before a judge, forced to play Russian roulette, and trapped with the walls closing in on him is a particular highlight.

But the film's secret weapon is Cushing. The dramatic peak sees Maitland struggling not to plunge a sacrificial dagger into his snoozing wife – who's wearing a glinting crucifix. A supernatural rock-paper-scissors follows, climaxing in crucifix blocking skull. It's a moment of utter nonsense, but Cushing's mounting panic and fear totally sell it, and command your rapt attention.

❖ **Extras** Interviews with horror experts Kim Newman and Jonathan Rigby (51 minutes); a 36-page booklet. **Ian Berriman**

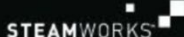
i As scripted, the dream sequence also saw Cushing's character flogged by torturers – but the BBFC nixed that.

CERES

TACTICAL SPACE COMBAT



OUT NOW



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HELLRAISER: THE SCARLET BOX

Clive Barker nailed it

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

1987/1988/1992 | 18 | Blu-ray

▶ Directors Clive Barker, Tony Randel, Anthony Hickox

▶ Cast Doug Bradley, Ashley Laurence, Claire Higgins, Kenneth Cranham

With most horror films making use of well-rehearsed templates, it's rare one comes along which feels entirely fresh. For that you need an artist like Clive Barker, whose directorial debut introduced the Cenobites, other-dimensional demons summoned by opening an ornate puzzle box.

Hellraiser is no teen horror, but

adult drama with dark undercurrents – sado-masochism, sexual obsession. As frustrated wife Julia resurrects dead lover Frank with the blood of butchered businessmen, there are queasy echoes of real-life killers. The effects still stand up, especially the make-up for the skinless Frank: an anatomical engraving brought to gooeey, glistening life. And Doug Bradley's performance as lead Cenobite Pinhead is regal in its understatement.

It's a film with a rich, instantly convincing mythology – one *Hellraiser II* expands backwards and outwards, exploring Pinhead's origins and sending final girl

Kirsty into a labyrinthine Hell in search of her dead dad. With Barker overseeing as producer, it feels consistent with what's gone before, and Hell's Escheresque environs impress. But it does eventually start to feel like simply a chase through a string of surreal setpieces.

II also steps up a lamentable process of Americanisation completed in *III*, the last *Hellraiser* film which need concern you. It takes the franchise mainstream, unleashing Pinhead to slaughter the masses, not just those who summon him, and its new Cenobites are embarrassing: one lobs CDs like shuriken; another delivers wince-inducing wisecracks, Freddy Krueger style. A scene where Pinhead profanes a church by mocking the Crucifixion still has power, though – even a bastardised version of Barker's vision has its moments.

Extras Like the Cenobites of bonus features, Arrow Video test the human capacity to enjoy extras to its very limits – there's only space here to list a few highlights. *Leviathan* is a comprehensive three-and-a-half-hour doc on *I* and *II*, previously available as a standalone DVD. Fans of *II* long fascinated by stills of Pinhead in medical garb will be delighted to find the excised sequence it relates to. *III* comes with an alternate cut that's three minutes longer. Interviews with Doug Bradley and Sean Chapman (Frank) are unusually thoughtful and insightful; another on industrial types Coil's rejected soundtrack is also fascinating. Taboo-busting Barker short *The Forbidden* (1978) is like Kenneth Anger fed through *Top Of The Pops*' effects box; perversely beautiful, its reverse-printed B&W imagery anticipates *Hellraiser*'s in interesting ways. There's tons more, including five commentaries, more shorts, old featurettes, raw FX footage, screenplays, and the comic book adap of *III*. Barring old EPKs, pretty much everything is worth your time. Plus: a 200-page book, booklet, art cards and poster. Staggering. **Ian Berriman**

Doug Bradley originally had the choice of playing Pinhead or a removal man, and ummed and aahed about it.



Thursdays at the suit shop were exciting.

DR TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS

Play Your Cards Fright

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

1965 | PG | Blu-ray

▶ Director Freddie Francis

▶ Cast Peter Cushing, Neil McCallum, Alan Freeman, Roy Castle, Donald Sutherland, Christopher Lee

BLU-RAY DEBUT From 1965 to

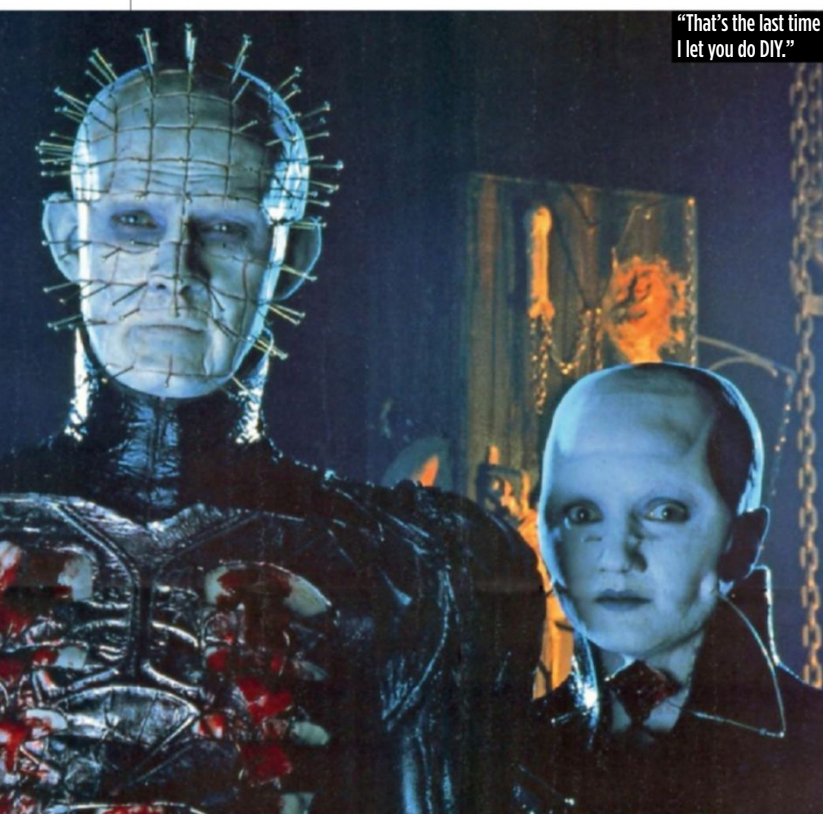
1974, British studio Amicus Productions hit on a successful format, taking the anthology horror template mastered by 1945's *Dead Of Night* and making it their own. This effort was just the first of seven.

A framing story sees Peter Cushing's mysterious Dr Schreck using tarot cards to tell his fellow train passengers' fortunes. The five stories that follow encompass werewolves, vampires, killer plants, voodoo and a disembodied hand.

Featuring Christopher Lee as a sneery art critic, the latter's the only one that's faintly creepy. The other four are so-so, with Milton Subotsky's script guilty of crude infodumps and feeble finales. But none lasts long enough to outstay its welcome – not even the one where Roy Castle grins and pratfalls his way through a record-breakingly daft account of what happens when a jazz trumpeter half-inches a voodoo chant. An amiable cavalcade of nonsense.

Extras An old commentary with Freddie Francis; a new Making Of doc (58 minutes); a 2012 appreciation of Chris Lee (45 minutes). **Ian Berriman**

The first anthology horror was 1932's *Unheimliche Geschichten*, which adapted stories by Poe and Stevenson.





Hospital visits were much more exciting with Ryan around.

SELF/LESS The Men With One Brain

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2015 | 12 | Blu-ray/DVD

▶ Director Tarsem Singh

▶ Cast Ryan Reynolds, Ben Kingsley, Matthew Goode, Natalie Martinez, Victor Garber

❖ **Get past the interminably irritating title and *Self/less* is a watchable, if far from exceptional, body-swap thriller.**

Ben Kingsley plays property magnate Damian Hale, an obscenely wealthy man suffering from a terminal illness. With money comes means, however: a highly suspicious underground medical procedure known as “shedding” that allows Damian to transfer his consciousness into Ryan Reynolds’s healthy body. But where did the body come from?

There are some interesting philosophical issues raised in *Self/*

less. Would you be willing to live forever, even if it meant cutting off all connections to your past life? *Should* we live forever? And the idea of a vengeful henchman who keeps coming back from the dead, even after being burnt alive, is neat.

It’s all a bit plodding though. Those philosophical issues are posed, but never adequately addressed, the twists are blatantly telegraphed and Reynolds is horribly miscast as a young Kingsley – you never buy that they share the same brain for a second. Not entirely *Worth/less* then, but a little *Point/less*.

❖ **Extras** The DVD gets a director’s commentary, a featurette on shedding, and a *Making Of*. The Blu-ray adds a featurette on the action. **Jordan Farley**

i In real life, Damian’s extravagantly gilded apartment is owned by Donald Trump – who gets a thanks in the credits.



“What! £6.50 for a cheese sandwich?!”

HOWL

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2015 | 18 | Blu-ray/DVD

❖ ***Werewolves On A Train*, anyone?** In this efficient but unremarkable Brit-horror, a late-night service is besieged after it breaks down.

Seeing a selfish survival-of-the-fittest type get his comeuppance satisfies, but there’s too much face-palm behaviour on both sides – in particular, the werewolves take an absolute age to think of *smashing a window*. And the fleeting presence of Sean Pertwee reminds you that *Dog Soldiers* was better.

❖ **Extras** Five behind-the-scenes pieces. **Ian Berriman**



Inside the ping pong ball was amazing.

THE MAN FROM THE FUTURE

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2011 | 12 | DVD

❖ **“What year is this?!”** Yep, we’re in *that* territory, as a scientist stumbles upon time travel and goes back to the night his life went wrong.

This Brazilian film plays out rather like the ace *Timecrimes*, but is less assured. After a mostly compulsive first half the characters’ unbelievable and unsympathetic behaviour rocks the boat, and the plot complications nearly sink it. But it’s not bad for a nowhere-near-Hollywood sci-fi effort.

❖ **Extras** None. **Russell Lewin**



Nic just hated *all* lampposts.

PAY THE GHOST

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2015 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD

❖ **Based on a short story** by Tim Lebbon, this is a cheap but likeable ghost story.

Mike Cole (Nicolas Cage) is a lecturer whose son’s abducted on Halloween. Beset by spooky visions, Cole sets out to rescue his little one.

Both Cage and *The Walking Dead*’s Sarah Wayne Callies put in solid performances and the story takes an interestingly weird turn towards the end, but dodgy CGI birds, over-familiar scares and hokey elements make for a fright-free experience.

❖ **Extras** A behind-the-scenes piece. **Will Salmon**



The Primark sale led to much violence.

TECHNOTISE: EDIT AND I

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2009 | 15 | DVD

❖ **This Serbian animated film** is lifted by its irreverent humour. After a college student in future Belgrade boosts her brain to cheat at an exam, she gets the kind of mind-expanding revelations that have people chasing after her with guns.

The movement looks synthetic, the action scenes are mediocre and the subtitling is sloppy, but the nonchalant, consistently funny comedy carries it through.

❖ **Extras** None. **Andrew Osmond**

HOME ENTERTAINMENT



Take this picture to your hairdresser.

A TRAVELLER IN TIME

Ho-hum Histories

★★★★★ EXTRAS

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

1978 | PG | DVD

▶ Director Dorothea Brookings

▶ Cast Sophie Thompson, Elizabeth Bradley, Gerald James

● **A Traveller In Time** takes '70s BBC children's television to the middle-class max. There's nothing necessarily wrong with that, but this five-part serial is probably too demure for most viewers now.

Penelope is a city girl who goes to stay in the country with her uncle and aunt in their ancient farmhouse. Soon she's transported back to the 16th century, where she meets a group of Catholics planning to save Mary Queen of Scots.

Even more so than early *Doctor Who*, the "history lesson" remit is amusingly blatant (Aunt Tissie to Uncle Barnabas: "Penelope wants to know about Mary Queen of Scots, why she was executed", so Uncle Barnabas puts down his paper and begins...).

Penelope somehow flits back and forth between time zones throughout the serial, although the main distraction is the constant switching between film and video, a common feature of TV of the period.

While not without some charm, it's *exceedingly* mild and a bit am-dram. Episodes have the most undramatic climaxes imaginable; one is titled "The Kitchen". If only the Fourth Doctor showed up!

● **Extras** None. **Russell Lewin**

i The serial is based on a 1939 book by Alison Uttley, best known for creating the character of Little Grey Rabbit.

The Great British Bake Off: the animated version.



SONG OF THE SEA

Music to our ears

★★★★★ EXTRAS

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2015 | U | Blu-ray/DVD

▶ Director Tomm Moore

▶ Cast David Rawle, Lucy O'Connell, Brendan Gleeson, Lisa Hannigan

● **Heartbroken that Hayao Miyazaki** has retired? Then check out the work of Tomm Moore and Cartoon Saloon. Their latest, *Song Of The Sea*, blends traditional folktales, a magical world just beyond our own and soulful hand-drawn animation in a way that's reminiscent of Ghibli's greatest creations.

Ben and Saoirse are young siblings who live by the sea. But Saoirse is special – she's a selkie who transforms into a seal in water, just like her missing mother. Fearing that Saoirse will one day disappear too, dad sends the kids inland to live with their grandma.

“The film is enchanting from its opening”

But when Saoirse gets sick, brother and sister embark on an epic voyage across the Irish countryside, crossing paths with faerie folk and a misguided witch who turns people into stone.

Enchanting from its opening moments, *Song Of The Sea* is a cross-generational gem. It tells a touching tale about the bond between a brother and sister and the importance of accepting sadness as part of the grieving process, but does so by blurring the lines between our world and a mythical landscape rooted in Ireland's heritage. The way the film's legendary characters mirror the everyday characters and their journeys is wonderfully imaginative, and as a whole it's beautifully constructed.

Top-notch vocal performances and exemplary music also prove crucial in a film where sound is just as important as visuals and plot. Unmissable.

● **Extras** A commentary; "Art Of"; three minutes of behind-the-scenes footage; short animation tests; trailer. **Jordan Farley**

i Try and keep a close eye on Saoirse's shadow – it doesn't always appear to be entirely human...



Johnny Cash belted another one out.

DRACULA

Palace of terror

★★★★★ EXTRAS

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

1973 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD

▶ Director Dan Curtis

▶ Cast Jack Palance, Nigel Davenport, Simon Ward, Fiona Lewis

● **Director Dan Curtis** updated the undead myth with 1972's *The Night Stalker*, the TV movie that gave the world ghoulish-chasing hack Carl Kolchak but this take on Bram Stoker's classic is all about fidelity, preserving the king of the vampires in Victorian aspic.

For all that it chases authenticity, its star makes a deeply improbable Dracula. One of cinema's natural gunslingers and gangsters, Jack Palance underplays the role, urbane and gentlemanly but capable of some purposeful striding when the occasion demands. He looks a little like a Vegas pianist in this and is, ultimately, just as menacing, as misplaced a romantic lead as an icon of horror.

There's a shortfall of scares in general. "A new height in unabated terror!" pants the trailer but in truth this is sluggish, flaccid stuff. With its Brit thesp cast it has the handsome mahogany creak of *Masterpiece Theatre* but it just doesn't deliver the jolts.

One lone, magnificent shot – Dracula on a forlorn Whitby beach, the wind whipping the sails of a wrecked ship while a dead sailor uselessly grasps a crucifix – seems to belong to another film entirely.

● **Extras** Trailers; gallery.

Nick Setchfield

i Marvel artist Gene Colan based his *Tomb Of Dracula* take on Jack Palance – three years before he was cast in this.

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"It's okay, I didn't understand *Genisys* either."



MAGGIE

Going Going Gone Girl

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED** 23 NOVEMBER

2015 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD

▶ Director Henry Hobson

▶ Cast Arnold Schwarzenegger, Abigail Breslin, Joely Richardson

❖ **Zombies** have been a big-screen staple since *Night Of The Living Dead*, but 47 years later walking corpses are more popular than ever. Naturally, the undead deluge is forcing filmmakers to be a bit more experimental.

In downbeat drama *Maggie*, Arnie plays dad to a daughter infected with a zombie virus. Rather than brain the teen on sight, the authorities allow him to take Maggie back home, where she can live out her final weeks.

Despite the presence of "necroambulists", *Maggie* has more in common with a terminal illness weepie than *The Walking Dead*,

albeit one that keeps its emotions admirably low-key. It's heavy going, and Breslin does a superb job selling the plight of a young woman whose body is betraying her. Arnie plays it straight, but doesn't have the emotional range the role requires, sulking around with a perpetual frown.

The world is problematic too. It's difficult to imagine a post-zombie society being this civilised, let alone the infectious mingling with healthy folk. With its muted colour palette and slow march to doom it isn't much fun to watch, and is never quite affecting enough to make the misery worthwhile.

❖ **Extras** Director's commentary, "Making *Maggie*" featurette, one deleted scene, interviews and trailers. **Jordan Farley**

i At \$8.6 million, *Maggie* is the lowest budget movie Arnie has starred in since *The Terminator* (which cost \$6.4 million).

MINIONS

Not despicable enough

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED** 16 NOVEMBER

2015 | U | Blu-ray/DVD

▶ Directors Pierre Coffin, Kyle Balda

▶ Cast Sandra Bullock, Jon Hamm, Pierre Coffin, Michael Keaton, Allison Janney, Geoffrey Rush

❖ **After two *Despicable Me*** films, the Minions have finally got their own movie, telling their tale from prehistory through to their first meeting with Gru.

It opens with the basics of the Minions' backstory. Always looking for the biggest and baddest nasty to serve, but nearly always killing him in the process, the Minions have followed dinosaurs, Egyptian pharaohs and Dracula before finally heading into safe isolation in Antarctica. But by the '60s the Minions are succumbing to depression without a bad guy to lead them, so Kevin, Stuart and

Bob head out into the world to find them a villain. After getting taken on as henchmen by Sandra Bullock's Scarlet Overkill, they're packed off to steal her the crown from the Tower of London – a job which unsurprisingly doesn't quite go to plan.

It's a fun effort that does an unexpectedly good job of expanding the Minions from loveable sidekicks to film-carrying movie stars, with Jennifer Saunders' arm-wrestling, beer-swilling Queen a particular highlight. There's also a great swinging '60s soundtrack. Unfortunately this just-too-lightweight film doesn't discover its heart until the very end, when the Minions finally meet the young Gru, and you realise what's been missing all along.

❖ **Extras** Three shorts: "Cro Minion" and "Competition", both

Sadly, Corbyn couldn't make it.



further adventures in "Minions being amusing"; and "Binky Nelson Unpacified" a look at the baby of the villainous Nelson family that's the best of the bunch. "Jingle Bells Minions Style" is a fun singalong with Minions-speech lyrics. The rest of the extras are buried inside rabbit holes of menus – an interactive map contains a variety of goodies from storyboards and

galleries to producers' comments and "fun facts", but be prepared for a lot of button pressing. Finally there's a "Behind The Goggles" look at the various filmmaking departments, but again it's short on content and long on interminable clicking. **Rhian Drinkwater**

i The carpet in inventor Herb Overkill's lab has the same pattern as the carpet of the Overlook Hotel in *The Shining*.



Eight truck salespeople was pushing it.

Z NATION Season One

The Winking Dead

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2014 | 18 | Blu-ray/DVD

▶ Creators Karl Schaefer, Craig Engler

▶ Cast Kellita Smith, DJ Qualls, Michael Welch, Keith Allan

◆ **A cut-price zombie show** produced by knock-off specialists The Asylum? Doesn't sound promising. But while it never excels, *Z Nation* is consistently entertaining.

That's largely because it has a mission arc, as a group of survivors travel from New York to California to deliver a guy carrying a zombie vaccine to a government lab. This means that every week there are new locations and new threats.

Self-aware in tone, in some ways it feels like a throwback to Romero's zombie movies. George loves his novelty zombies and gory effects "gags", and *Z Nation* does too; it's always looking for new ways to entertain, be it Amish zombies or death by food-mixer. And in sardonic, self-serving vaccine-carrier Murphy it has a brilliant character, one whose emerging zombie-whispering abilities are fresh and interesting.

It can't compete with *The Walking Dead* in the emotional stakes, and sometimes its attempts to make your inner Butthead mutter, "Huh-huh, cool," are a shade too dumb. But it beats 80% of direct-to-video zombie movies.

◆ **Extras** A Making Of and pieces on the make-up and explosions/CGI effects/score (38 minutes); zombie kills montage; gag reel. **Ian Berriman**

Before he won the role of Murphy, actor Keith Allan was working at The Asylum as their stage manager.



Ignored once again, Wardrobe sunk into deeper depression.

HEMLOCK GROVE Season Three

A bloody end

★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2015 | N/A | Available to stream

▶ Showrunner Charles H Eglee

▶ Cast Famke Janssen, Landon Liboiron, Bill Skarsgard, Joel de la Fuente

NETFLIX EXCLUSIVE **Renewed and** effectively cancelled at the same time, *Hemlock Grove* arrives for its third serving of horror, gore, secrets, sex and violence. And, as has been the norm for this series born from Brian McGreevy's book, it's an unwieldy mess.

The big problem is the tone, which wavers between campy Grand Guignol and quiet, doom-laden character work. Like some supernatural creature caught in the middle of a transformation, it ends up twisted, but unable to generate much in the way of scares or empathy. And even with the knowledge that this is the final chapter, and therefore allows the writers to detonate plot bombs as they please, the end is a whimper rather than a bang.

We're back in the mysterious

small Pittsburgh town where monsters lurk and weirdness is an everyday occurrence. As usual, vampire-like Upir Roman (Bill Skarsgard) and werewolf Peter (Landon Liboiron) continue their bromance as they hunt for Roman's baby Nadia, snatched at the end of last season by a winged creature that had been masquerading as the town's doctor. Their storyline seems to wend through the same old corridors, with lots of arguing but little substance.

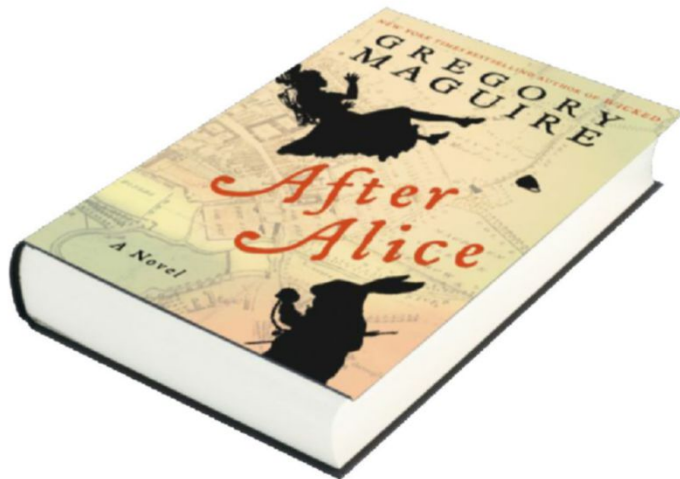
If there's a true bright spot, it's Madeleine Martin as Roman's troubled sister Shelley, who's always been the real heart of the show. She finally gets to enjoy a taste of true happiness, and even romance, as all around her collapses into chaos. Everything else either falls into vague fun or laughably dumb. Overall you feel rather more glad than sad that it's all coming to a close. **James White**

New cast member Camille De Pazzis began her career as a model, discovered on the streets of Paris by Jean Paul Gaultier.

(ROUND UP)



More character-driven than usual, **AMERICAN HORROR STORY: FREAK SHOW** (out now, Blu-ray/DVD) does a good job of making its '50s carny folk relatable – Sarah Paulson particularly impresses as conjoined twins – while killer clown Twisty provides some effective shocks. The anachronistic use of songs by Bowie and Nirvana is a bit naff, though. **In PENNY DREADFUL SEASON TWO** (out now, Blu-ray/DVD) Eva Green's spooksome Vanessa goes back to her supernatural roots; the law threatens to catch up with Ethan; Dorian Gray's up to bad things; and Frankenstein's created another monster. Blood, guts, gore, nudity, sex, death, love – this show doesn't do anything by halves. Year two tastes just as foul as the first, but in the good way. **SLEEPY HOLLOW SEASON TWO** (out now, Blu-ray/DVD) wobbles a lot for a show that should be on firmer ground by now – although that's not to say it isn't good fun, too. The biggest issue lies with the rescue of Ichabod's missus, Katrina, from Purgatory – despite being a witch from the 17th century, she's as dull as ditchwater. Still, the end-of-the-world schtick is just as breakneck-paced and entertaining as ever. Finally, **ORPHAN BLACK SEASON THREE** (out now, Blu-ray/DVD) is a convoluted swirl of competing factions and objectives as the "Castor" male clone army hunt for a cure to their defective physiology, while "Soccer Mom Clone" Alison becomes a suburban drug dealer. Tatiana Maslany's acting remains as watchable as ever. Slow at first, it accelerates to a thrilling, absurd and beautiful climax.



AFTER ALICE

Back down the rabbit hole



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

246 pages | Hardback/Ebook

► Author Gregory Maguire

► Publisher Headline

❖ **This year marks 150 years** since the first publication of *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland*. It's certainly easy to see why a publisher might want a new novel featuring Lewis Carroll's characters, but who would have the audacity to tackle such a project?

Step forward Gregory Maguire, whose *Wicked* riffed off a key work of American fantasy, L Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard Of Oz*, telling the story of the Witch of the West. *Wicked* went on to become both a bestseller in its own right and a blockbuster musical. Whether the same will happen for *After Alice* is far from certain – and not just because Lewis Carroll's characters and scenarios so often seem to defy efforts at adaptation.

That's not to say this slim volume is a bad novel. Or unambitious. Far from it. Other writers might have been content to follow Alice on a third trip – the word is, of course, apposite, and that's the first and last what-was-

Lewis-Carroll-smoking? joke we propose to make – into Wonderland. Instead, Maguire opts to have Alice's friend, Ada (mentioned briefly in *Wonderland*), explore the same strange environs.

He also splits the action. Chapters in which we get to know Ada through her experiences down the rabbit hole meeting the likes of the Cheshire Cat, the Mad Hatter and the White Queen are interspersed with chapters set in Victorian Oxford. Here, Alice's older sister, Lydia, and Ada's governess, Miss Armstrong, worry about what's happened to the two girls. An ageing Charles Darwin is on a visit to Oxford. We also meet a former slave, a lad named Siam, and his guardian. It's often these chapters that work best, as Maguire conjures up a vision of

“Perhaps it helps to have read *Alice's Adventures* recently”

Victorian England that ranges across its stuffiness, its snobbery and its cruelties.

Maguire also offers plenty of good gags. When Ada meets the Cheshire Cat, we're told “the cat was probably bathing its particulars, she was glad the body was absent”. Lewis Carroll, it's safe to say, would never have published this line, although he might have run to the gag about salt completing Humpty Dumpty. The decision to make Ada someone living inside an “iron corset, that penitential vest intended to tame the crookedness in her spine” is likewise successful. Here's someone for whom Wonderland is potentially a place of freedom, a place where she can move around easily.

As for Maguire's evocation of Wonderland, well, if it's not quite as vivid as that of Lewis Carroll, that's eminently forgivable. Less easy to overlook, though, is the plot, or rather the lack of a clear one. As the above paragraphs should hint, there's plenty going on in *After Alice*, it's just that it's tricky to figure out why. The press release makes much of this being Ada's odyssey in the underworld as a rescue mission, and yet the book doesn't come across as this linear, this straightforward.

There seems to be deep symbolism, for instance, in Darwin's presence, yet it's opaquely expressed, to the extent of perhaps not being expressed at all. Likewise, there's much here on the nature of freedom, yet it's difficult to know what precise point about this subject Maguire might be trying to make.

Perhaps it helps to have read *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland* recently; it may be that there are references you'll miss if you haven't. But if that's the case it's likely to be a problem for many readers. Much of *After Alice* is beautifully written, it's just a shame you're so often left wondering what's really going on in Wonderland rather than basking in the wonder of returning to Carroll's imaginary world.

Jonathan Wright

i Maguire once considered writing a book about the older *Oliver Twist*, but decided, “that, perhaps, is a twisted idea”.



DEPARTURE

Lost in the apocalypse



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

322 pages | Hardback

► Author AG Riddle

► Publisher Harper Voyager

❖ **A mix of big ideas and epic** thrills is often what people expect from their science fiction, and taken on those terms, *Departure* – previously a self-published success story – certainly delivers. It's packed full of mind-expanding concepts and relentless action – but unfortunately, it's so packed that it ends up an odd, credulity-straining novel that ultimately bursts at the seams.

The story opens as if it's going to be a post-apocalyptic spin on *Lost*, as the survivors of a plane crash find themselves cut off from civilisation and struggling to survive in a world that's been strangely transformed. From there, things get progressively nuttier, pulling in everything from deadly plagues and quantum mechanics to orbital space colonies and time travel.

Author AG Riddle gets away with some of this by keeping the pace lightning-fast (barring a selection of clunky infodumps and an unexpectedly low-key finale). He also pulls off some exciting action setpieces, but his dialogue creaks and his characters are two-dimensional. There's a certain amount of pulpy fun to be found in this admirably bonkers mainstream-aimed thriller, but for dedicated SF fans, this kind of thing has been done better many times before. **Saxon Bullock**

i The movie rights for *Departure* have already been snapped up by Twentieth Century Fox.



THE PROMISE OF THE CHILD

Land of Confusion



► **RELEASED 19 NOVEMBER**

544 pages | Paperback/Ebook

► Author **Tom Toner**

► Publisher **Gollancz**

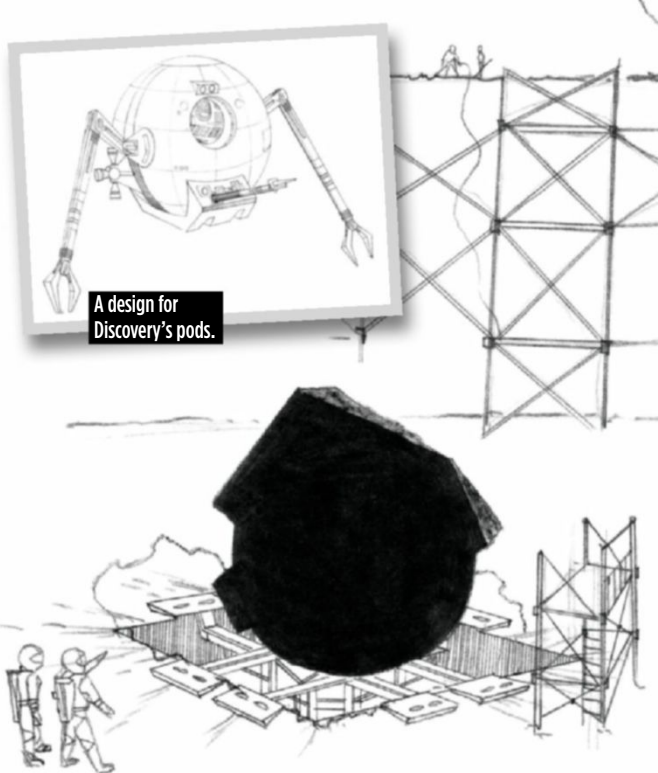
❖ **“Sense of wonder” is a vital ingredient in science fiction, especially in space opera – as readers, we want new, exciting and complex worlds to explore. But there’s a fine line between complex and baffling, and it’s a line that colourful new SF epic *The Promise Of The Child* doesn’t always stay the right side of.**

Set in a distant future where humanity has evolved into dozens of different species, it’s the story of the latter days of the Amaranthine Firmament, a civilisation that’s in danger of being overwhelmed by the bizarre “Prism” races.

The leisurely plot focuses on a number of disparate characters as a mysterious figure known as Aaron the Long-Life manipulates events, but Tom Toner keeps the narrative diffuse for much of the tale, which makes for an odd, sometimes frustrating experience.

Toner’s tremendous imagination and lyrical prose help counteract some of these issues, although the literary style remains challenging throughout. Closest in tone to the dense, intellectual style of SF authors like Hannu Rajaniemi, *The Promise Of The Child* is a beautifully crafted read that’s evocative and hugely inventive, but also not for the easily perplexed. **Saxon Bullock**

i Toner’s dream cast for a movie includes Ed Harris and Marion Cotillard, with Benedict Cumberbatch as Aaron.



A design for Discovery's pods.

The Monolith started off looking very different.

THE 2001 FILE

A Design For (Space) Life



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

336 pages | Hardback

► Author **Christopher Frayling**

► Publisher **Reel Art Press**

❖ **Stanley Kubrick’s fastidiousness was legendary, so it’s no surprise that this book of *2001* concept art is equally obsessive. It focuses on the archive of Harry Lange – the NASA designer-turned-Art Director who visualised the film’s hardware after Kubrick’s intended collaborator, Ken Adam, bailed on what he saw as a half-formed and stressful project.**

“The cult of Kubrick will be in heaven here”

Lange’s designs are remarkably believable. Indeed, at times this feels more like a technical manual than an art book, with page after page of crisp black and white line drawings detailing chairs, docking bays and landing pads. More exciting are the alternative designs for the space station, various craft and the monolith – of which we see numerous angular designs, but none as implacably eerie as that simple rectangle.

The cult of Kubrick will be in heaven here. And while agnostics may find the book a little dry in places, the art and Frayling’s text make for an engaging insight into the collaboration between Lange, Kubrick and Arthur C Clarke – three geniuses pulling together to create a masterpiece. **Will Salmon**

i *2001* wasn’t Lange’s only brush with SF: he also worked on *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return Of The Jedi*.



THE SECRETS OF DREARCLIFF GRANGE SCHOOL

In a class of its own



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

416 pages | Paperback/Ebook

► Author **Kim Newman**

► Publisher **Titan Books**

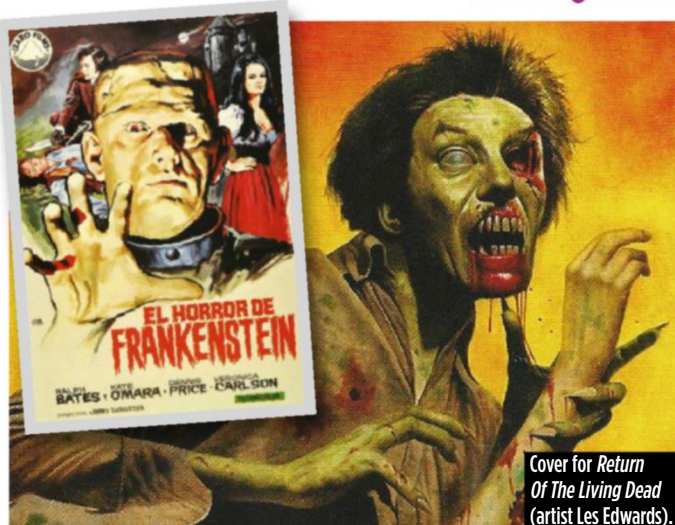
❖ **While there have been many fantasy and horror stories and films set in schools, there are very few written for adults that play on the classic school story genre.**

Given that said genre had its heyday in roughly the same time period as the adventure story, it’s no surprise that Kim Newman, with his love of pulps and adventure tales, is the person to take it on – and he does so brilliantly. The freezing dorms, vicious prefects (or “whips”) and unique argot of the school are common features in such tales, as is the notion of a secret gang of plucky gels taking on ne’er-do-wells. All Newman’s done is stir in a smattering of supernatural talents and extradimensional entities, and had fun with the tropes.

He’s also mixed in a few familiar faces from his *Diogenes Club* stories, to which this novel feels very similar in tone. It’s not as peppered with pop culture references as the *Anno Dracula* books – though there are enough of those to raise a smile. The only thing that prevents it being perfect is the ending, which is a bit too Lovecraftian in its lack of firm detail. **Miriam McDonald**

i The first thing Newman read that made him want to write was HG Wells’s killer squid story “The Sea Raiders”.

BOOKS



THE ART OF HORROR

Look of terror



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

256 pages | Hardback

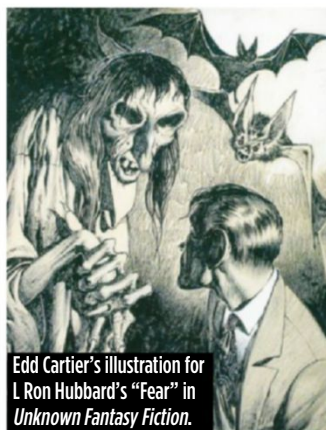
▶ Editor Stephen Jones

▶ Publisher Applause

❖ This “illustrated history” falls frustratingly short of magnificence for a couple of reasons.

Arranged thematically, it's divided into 10 sections on subjects such as werewolves, Lovecraftian horrors and psychos, and often feels like a history of a particular genre, with the visual focus lost. With ten different writers, there's some variance in approach: the chapter on ghost stories takes pains to namecheck as many illustrators as possible, and the one on alien horrors lauds pulp magazine artists Frank R Paul and Edward Cartier. But overall it feels like there's too much emphasis on the fiction and not enough on the artists who illustrated it.

“Pleasingly crammed with rare, gruesome imagery”



Edd Cartier's illustration for L Ron Hubbard's “Fear” in *Unknown Fantasy Fiction*.

Secondly, many of the works given the most space are very recent. There will be practical reasons for that – much of the original art represented here via vintage book or magazine covers is no doubt lost – but it can feel like modern-day illustrators are foregrounded at the expense of figures of greater significance.

That said, it remains pleasingly crammed with gruesome imagery, much of it rare, with passages of well-researched detail about, for example, how the visual language of the vampire developed over time. **Calvin Baxter**

i Bram Stoker's *Dracula* was first illustrated – crawling down his castle wall – on the cover of an abridged 1901 paperback.



MADE TO KILL

Metal Mickey Spillane



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

268 pages | Paperback/Ebook

▶ Author Adam Christopher

▶ Publisher Titan Books

❖ It's obvious when you think about it. The heroes of hard-boiled detective fiction are unwavering, talk in a deadpan monotone and have to process chaos into some kind of order. So why not replace one with a robot?

Set in a parallel '60s LA where robots have already come and gone, this latest novel from the prolific Adam Christopher is pure pulp joy. It follows a hunk of metal called Raymond Electromatic, the last robot left, guided by Ada, the office computer. It's like late Raymond Chandler tumbling into early Philip K Dick, and the tone is perfect, especially in its adoption of Chandler's grimly baroque similes. “I laughed,” says Ray at one point. “It sounded like two rocks going for a joyride in a clothes washer.”

But Christopher goes deeper than pastiche. Ray's primitive systems can only retain 24 hours of memory, so each day he's a clean slate, briefed on the case by Ada – and it's not clear he can trust her. This is wonderfully noir, leaving Ray slightly adrift between the forces trying to manipulate him. And in true Chandler style, Ray quickly becomes implicated in the very case he's investigating, making things even knottier.

Made To Kill is book one of a trilogy. We'd happily go for more than three. **Eddie Robson**

i If you want to read more detective fiction by Adam Christopher, he also writes spin-off books for *Elementary*.

BULLET TIME

A BOOK IN BULLET POINTS



STAR WARS: THE ORIGINAL TOPPS TRADING CARD SERIES

Volume One

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **RELEASED 17 NOV**

548 pages | Hardback

▶ Author Gary Gerani

▶ Publisher Abrams

● Satisfyingly chunky, this collects all five sets of the original gum cards from '77 and '78 – that's 330 cards (fronts and backs) and 55 stickers.

● Plus: the ultra-rare Wonder Bread set, reprinted for the first time. You also get four bonus replica trading cards.

● There's a fascinating intro and fact-filled commentary by Gary Gerani.

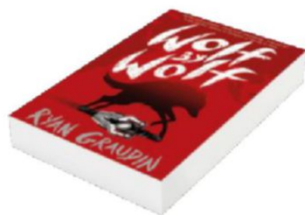
● Warning: contains the infamous C-3PO “goldenrod” pic.

Prep the mind bleach!

● A powerful nostalgia fix for the original Force generation – and a treasure box of rare pics and insider info for all fans.



Reviews



WOLF BY WOLF

Iron Cross country



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

392 pages | Paperback/Ebook

► Author Ryan Graudin

► Publisher Indigo

❖ **Killing Hitler is such a** hackneyed idea in SF that you could be forgiven for putting down *Wolf By Wolf* almost as soon as you'd picked it up.

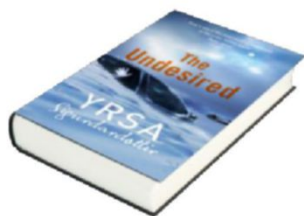
That would be a mistake, as Ryan Graudin's novel is really all about concentration camp escapee turned assassin Yael – a shapeshifter. The plot sees Yael pass herself off as a Nazi motorcycling heroine to compete in a gruelling cross-continental race. A win will bring her close enough to Hitler – paranoid ruler of Europe in this alternate reality – to kill him.

While the endurance test aspect has something of *The Hunger Games* about it and the action sequences would translate well to the big screen, the delicate handling of Yael's traumatic past (she was experimented on to change her looks) and realistic relationships mean that the story has much in common with Graudin's excellent debut, *The Walled City*.

Where the novel falls down is in Yael's shapeshifting abilities: she's not able to change her "gender" but seems able to alter her height and weight – yet surely it would be easier to imitate a male face than to alter one's mass? Fortunately the story is fast-paced and enjoyable enough to speed you past that irregularity.

Miriam McDonald

i Yael was the name of a Biblical heroine who killed the leader of an enemy army using a tent peg.



THE UNDESIRE

A very cold case



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

353 pages | Hardback/Ebook

► Author Yrsa Sigurdardottir

► Publisher Hodder & Stoughton

❖ **As a relatively isolated** country with a population of only about 320,000, Iceland could be the world's biggest small town. Everyone knows everyone, and has done for yonks. It makes a fascinating study for genealogists – and a terrifyingly claustrophobic setting for a horror novel, because when something horrible happens, everyone's affected.

There are two stories in *The Undesired*, but, appropriately, they're linked. In the first, a runaway in the '70s finds a job at a juvenile detention centre where the sadistic owners scare the staff as much as the boys. In the second, a government employee investigates wrongdoing at the now-closed facility while struggling to relate to his pre-teen daughter after his ex-wife's untimely death.

Both stories feature unwanted kids and mysterious deaths, and both also contain moments of shocking darkness. Anyone hoping for a proper scare will be let down, though, because once the connection between past and present is revealed, it all becomes depressingly mundane. A bit like delving into your family tree hoping to find you're related to royalty, only to discover you're actually the third cousin twice-removed of your least favourite co-worker. Disappointing. Sarah Dobbs

i The book's original Icelandic title was *Kuldi*, which means "cold." Doesn't really tell you much, does it?

WHSmith

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BOOKS



THE ARK

Deep-space detection



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

400 pages | Paperback/Ebook

► Author Patrick S Tomlinson

► Publisher Angry Robot

❖ **The Earth has been** destroyed, and humanity reduced to 50,000 souls on a giant spaceship, but people still need detectives. Bryan Benson is part of the police force on the eponymous craft, near the end of its two-century journey to a new planetary home. He's presented with a missing-man case which involves Monet paintings, anonymous assassins, class tensions and secrets in the Ark's dark depths.

Much of the first half is highly enjoyable, a lightweight but smart mashup of trad space opera and trad detecting. But the problems multiply, with terribly cheesy dialogue, an over-protracted mystery, some very convenient clues and a problem of scale. With humanity's fate about to be decided, it's hard to stay riveted by Benson's drawn-out investigation, despite his conviction that the two are connected. Perversely, when there's a massive 9/11-style disaster, it feels indecently skimmed over as the plot finally speeds up.

Benson himself is a fairly multi-dimensional hero, but other characters vary; a fearsome old-woman museum curator is good fun, while an underage Asian "tart with a heart" is a bad misstep. But the final wrap-up is satisfying, despite obvious hooks for next year's sequel. **Andrew Osmond**

i The plot involves the pistol used to kill Archduke Ferdinand, now property of the Vienna Museum of Military History.



Behold the world's least comfortable armchair.

DOCTOR WHO: IMPOSSIBLE WORLDS

Picturing the Whoniverse



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

288 pages | Hardback

► Authors Stephen Nicholas, Mike Tucker

► Publisher BBC Books

❖ **The best thing about this** coffee-table book on the *Doctor Who* art department is the window it opens into a parallel universe. Not the one where Rose lives with a spare David Tennant, but the one where the panels on the TARDIS console slide out, the New Paradigm Daleks aren't Teletubby-coloured, and the new-look Silurians still have a third eye – just a few of the paths not taken glimpsed here in early concept art.

It's divided thematically, with sections on the TARDIS/other craft, the Daleks, the Cybermen/robots, the Sontarans/weaponry, the Sonic/gadgets and Gallifrey/



The lesser known "melted nose" Ood.

other worlds. There are designs from the classic series too (generally rough sketches in pencil or pen), though they're thin on the ground, and long-time fans will have seen a fair few before. With so much history to cover, the accompanying text is necessarily selective, but – though a little dry – does a decent job of highlighting key developments.

But it's the artwork that's the main draw here, and it looks glorious printed at large size on glossy paper; it's a pleasure to see the vivid imaginations of artists like Peter McKinstry finally get the showcase they deserve. **Ian Berriman**

i Tucked away at the back in a wallet are 15 art cards, including one featuring the Zygon cave from the current series.



THE NIGHT CLOCK

May wind you up



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

384 pages | Paperback/Ebook

► Author Paul Meloy

► Publisher Solaris

❖ **The Night Clock is full of** hideous demons, but none as misshapen as this baffling, barely-coherent book. It starts in miserabilist mode, on a bleak estate where suicide rates are surging and the local drunk gibbers of shadow-monsters. Then it becomes a haphazard dream fantasy, with talking animals and thundering steam trains.

Of course, fantasy can move between extremely different tones and registers to dazzling effect, but here it just feels like a lot of bits. Some of these feel like the beginnings of very good stories – such as a portrait of a damaged, institutionalised boy, devastated by grief. The book has a more harrowing fantasy treatment of mental illness than anything in Terry Gilliam's films, but even that tapers off. Protagonists are set up interestingly, then abandoned in favour of half-baked fantasy figures, whose introductions are juddering and clumsy.

The writing wavers between compelling and alienating, with lots of annoying similes that don't work and a fantasy conflict that's too vague to register on any level. As the magic battles heap up, the reader longs for more reality – only for a bit of casual real-world vigilante killing to round things off in disgusting fashion. **Andrew Osmond**

i Paul Meloy decided he wanted to write horror after reading James Herbert's *The Rats* at the age of 12. "It rocked!"

“ Opens a window into a parallel universe ”

Reviews



LOST GIRL

The darkest timeline



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

448 pages | Paperback/Ebook

▶ Author Adam Nevill

▶ Publisher Pan

It's hard not to get depressed when you browse the newspaper stands. We're constantly reminded that we're on the brink of environmental crisis, while the tabloids glory in tales of violence and murder. *Lost Girl* imagines an ultra-pessimistic future where everything that could possibly have gone wrong has.

In 38 years' time, climate change has displaced millions, while pandemics ravage the populace. Amid this chaos, a little girl is stolen from her family. Wracked with grief and rage, her father sets out on a path of bloody revenge. But there's more to this disappearance than meets the eye, and he's soon face-to-face with the forces of the King Death cult...

This is a more science fictional tale than Adam Nevill's previous work, but it's just as rich with commentary on humanity's dark side as *No One Gets Out Alive*, which took a hard look at poverty. It's also surprisingly fun... As the nameless father rampages across future Britain offing drug dealers and sex offenders, the book comes off like a visceral cross between *Taken*, *Death Wish* and George Monbiot's more pessimistic *Guardian* columns. It's a tough read, at times, but also a thrilling one.

Will Salmon

Before he became known as a horror writer, Nevill was an editor of erotic romance novels.

REISSUES

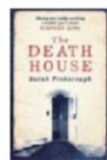
Pick of the paperbacks this month is **GUNS OF THE DAWN** (★★★★, 19 November, Pan), the



first in a new fantasy series by Adrian Tchaikovsky. It centres on a woman drafted into a civil war, who

swaps her big old house and the unwanted attentions of a bureaucrat for slow-firing muskets and mysterious warlocks – think Mr Darcy with fireballs. We said: "Slow to ignite, more plodding *Pride And Prejudice* at first than *Sharpe*. But once the musket balls start to fly, Tchaikovsky keeps you hooked with breathless battle scenes and well-drawn characters". The latest by Sarah

Pinborough, **THE DEATH HOUSE** (★★★★, 12 November, Gollancz),



downplays its SF elements as it follows the lives of a bunch of kids with a rare genetic defect which could erupt at any time with deadly results, living in an isolated school/prison on an island. We said: "Not a book for lovers of plot. Instead, it's focused on character and the theme of living with your own mortality... it's heavy stuff, but handled deftly. Impressive and moving." Finally, former *The Tube* presenter Muriel Gray's tersely written horror debut **THE TRICKSTER** (3 December, Harper Voyager) is getting



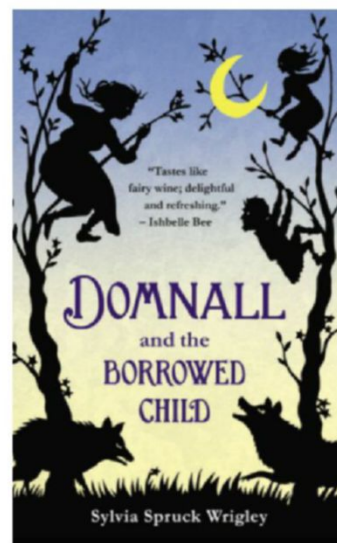
a 20th anniversary reissue, with a new foreword by Mark Millar. The titular character is a shapeshifting demon from Native Canadian mythology that's butchering people at a ski resort. Brace yourself for full-blooded gore. Gray's *Furnace* and *The Ancient* are also getting another run out.



Envy of Angels

October 20th, 2015

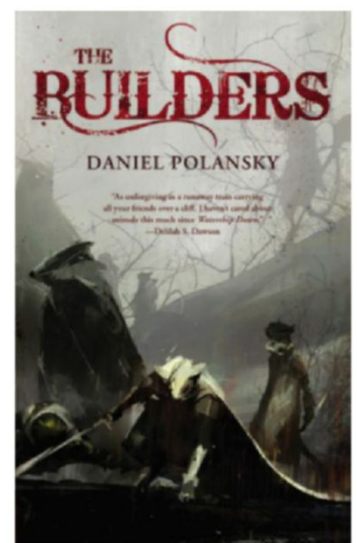
Where devils on horseback are the clients, not the dish.



Domnall and the Borrowed Child

November 11th, 2015

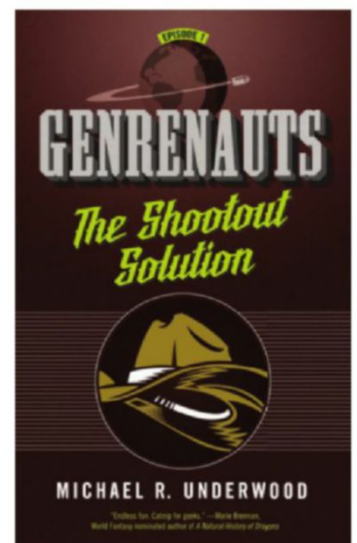
"Delightful and refreshing."
— Ishbelle Bee



The Builders

November 11th, 2015

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Genrenauts: The Shootout Solution

November 17th, 2015

"Catnip for genre geeks."
— Marie Brennan

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MADE TO KILL *by Adam Christopher*

What would a science fiction story written by Raymond Chandler look like? This thrilling speculative noir follows the PI turned hit man Ray, the last robot in the world.

Hollywood, California. Summer, 1965. A girl called Eva. A robot called Ray. A missing movie star to find... and a diabolical masterplan to thwart.

Tuesday. Just another beautiful morning in Hollywood, California. The sun came in through the window behind me. It was always sunny. It had been sunny for as long as I could remember.

Which currently was about two hours, ten minutes, and a handful of seconds not worth mentioning.

I sat at the table in the computer room. I was reading the *Daily News*. Around me Ada clicked and her lights flashed and her tapes spun. We were killing time while we waited for a job to come in. It was August 10, 1965. I knew that was the date because it was printed across the top of the newspaper in a very convenient manner.

There was a headline splashed all the way across the front page and the article that went with it was all about a film called *Red Lucky*. That got my attention. Movies, even in this town, rarely merited such prime newspaper real estate. I was obliged, I felt, to keep reading just to see what all the hoopla was.

"Listen to this," I said. Ada made a sound like she was putting out a cigarette in an ashtray that was in need of emptying, and then the sound was gone. If it had ever been there in the first place.

"If it's about President Kennedy and his trip to Cuba, I'm not interested," she said. Her voice came from somewhere near the ceiling. I wasn't quite sure where exactly. I was sitting right inside of her.

I frowned, or at least it felt like I did. I scanned the front page again and saw what she was talking about: a piece – relegated to the bottom half – that was a lot of hot puff about Kennedy's weeklong visit to Havana and how well the negotiations were going to put some good old American-made nuclear missiles down there. Just in case. After reading it I wasn't quite sure whether I was supposed to hang a Stars and Stripes out of the office window or not.

Huh. Ada was right. When all was said and done, world affairs were a little beyond my interests, too.

"So," I said, "do you want to hear about this cinematic marvel of the modern age or not?"

"Sure, why not?"

I found my place and I started reading. It was pretty interesting, actually. This was no ordinary movie – *Red Lucky* not only had an A-list cast assembled from across different studios, which I figured was quite something

The Author



→ Adam Christopher is a novelist, comic writer, and award-winning editor. Adam is the author of *The Burning Dark*, the official tie-in novels based on the hit CBS television show *Elementary*, as well as co-writer of *The Shield* for Dark Circle Comics. Born in New Zealand, he has lived in Great Britain since 2006. He tweets to 6,000 followers as @ghostfinder.

given most studios seemed to be at each other's throats most of the time with their actors tied up in exclusive contracts as tight as Ada's purse strings, but was going to be the first *national* film premiere, the picture beamed into theaters all over the country thanks to some new development in cinematic magic. The red-carpet premiere was due to be held at Grauman's Chinese Theatre this coming Friday, but regular folk could grab a ticket and popcorn and take up space in theaters in twenty cities stretching from here to New York.

Seemed like a neat idea. I wondered if Ada could maybe give me the night off and I could go take a look. There were three other theaters in LA alone hosting the opening night beam-in. Couldn't hurt to ask so that's what I did.

"It's been quiet, Ada," I said, then I stopped as I wondered if it really had been quiet or whether that was just me not remembering being busy, but I'd started my query so I decided to finish it. "And if it's quiet I think

I should be allowed to go to the movies. It's not like I need to be on call. We don't get much in the way of last-minute assassination requests."

At this Ada laughed and for a moment I saw an older woman with big hair leaning back in a leather chair with her stockinged feet up on a wooden desk and a cigarette burning toward the fingers of her right hand.

And then it was gone and I was back in the office, surrounded by a computer and miles of spinning magnetic tape.

The image was just an echo. Something ephemeral inherited from Thornton, most like.

"It has been quiet, that's true," said Ada. "Call it a lull. But I've got my ear to the ground, don't you worry your pretty little tin head."

My head was steel and titanium and I was about to point that out when Ada laughed again like a twenty-a-day smoker and said something about lightening up. Except I wasn't listening. Something else had my attention.

There was someone in the outer office.

"There's someone in the office," I said, and Ada stopped laughing. On my left a tape stopped and then spun back in the opposite direction. I knew what that meant. Ada was thinking.

I turned up my ears and had a listen. I heard a pair of feet stepping lightly on the rug out in the other room, and I heard the creak of leather, like someone was squeezing a big bag. And then there was a *thunk*, dull and heavy, like someone was putting something dull and heavy down on the floor.

"Hello?" asked the someone. Her voice was quiet and uncertain and breathy.

I looked up at the ceiling. I wasn't sure where Ada's eyes were, exactly, but that seemed like a good enough bet.

"Well?"

Ada's tapes spun. "Well, go see what she wants and then get rid of her."

"Okay."

"And by 'get rid of her,' I mean show her the door rather than the Pearly Gates, okay?"

I stood up and put the paper down on the table. "Hey, I only kill for money, remember?"

Ada laughed. "Oh, I sure do, honey."

I walked across the computer room and reached for the door to the office and opened it and stepped through and then closed the door after me.

The girl was maybe twenty and perhaps not even that, and when she saw me she

took a few steps backward and her eyes crinkled at the corners, like she realized this was a bad idea and that she'd come to the wrong place and things were not about to go in her favor.

Which is the reaction I get, much of the time. Most folk know about robots. Some folk over a certain age even remember them, the way we directed traffic and collected bus tickets and took out the trash. But most folk, whether from personal experience or not, don't much like the *idea* of robots.

See, ten years ago, maybe more, the big rollout of robots – a joint effort between the federal government, local authorities, and private enterprise – was heralded as the dawn of a new scientific age. And this new scientific age was a really great idea for a while. People liked it.

And then they stopped liking it.

There were two reasons. One, that the jobs

“The big rollout of robots was heralded as the dawn of a new scientific age. People liked it”

we – well, they – started taking, even the jobs that were menial or unpleasant or were attached to a certain kind of risk that was liable to send a man to his grave earlier than hoped for, those were jobs that people actually really did want to do. The machine men built to ease the burden of labor of those built out of flesh and blood were not welcomed but resented. Or

maybe it wasn't the robots that were resented, but the men who designed and built them.

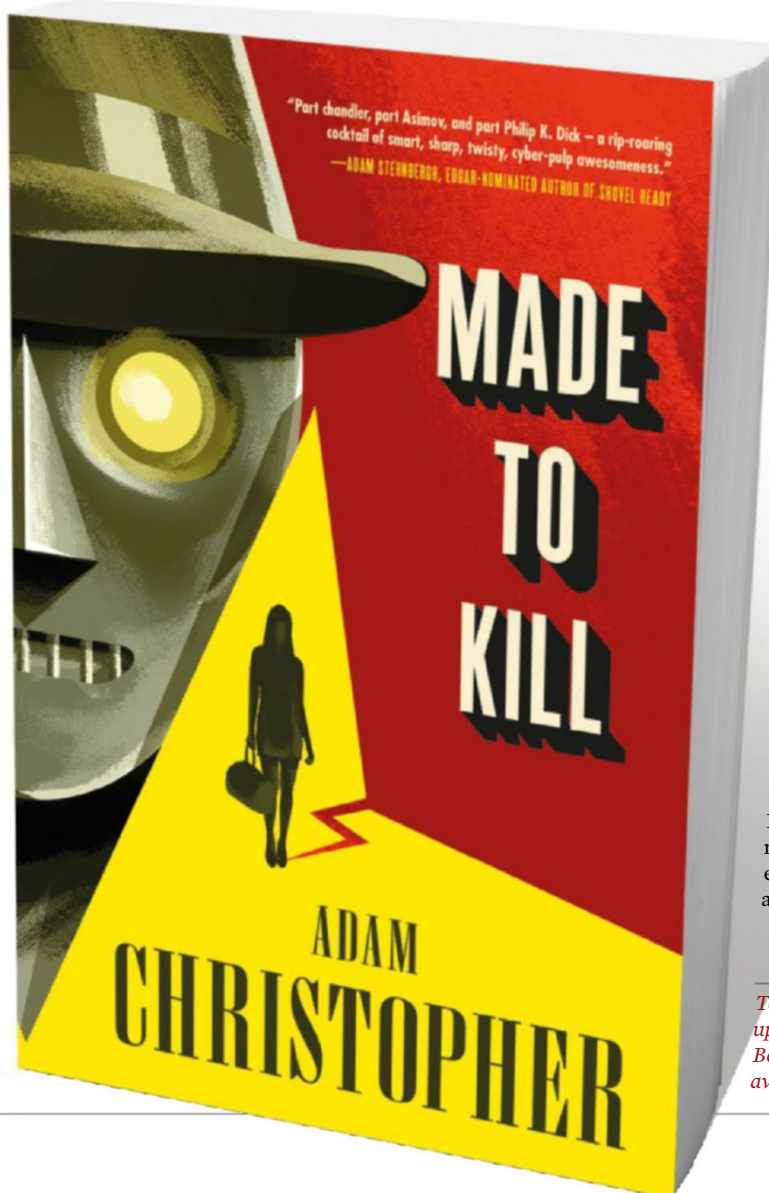
Whatever the case, the resentment turned into something altogether nastier. Dangerous, even. That new golden dawn got a little cloudy, and quick.

And two, it turned out robots that looked almost but not quite like people were actually a little creepy. People just didn't *like* them, and some people went so far as to say they'd rather have a conversation with their toaster oven than one of us. From my own experience it seemed to be about fifty-fifty: I was viewed with either a quiet and cautious curiosity, or with a healthy dose of fear and disgust. Then again, being the last robot in the world, maybe I had it a little easier than my electromantic ancestors.

But put the two unexpected attitudes together and what you got wasn't quite *robophobia*, but it was close enough. The United States Department of Robot Labor canceled the program. All robots in public and private employ were immediately recalled and junked.

The grand experiment was over. And then along came me. ●

To find out what happens next, pick up *Made to Kill*, out now from Titan Books (RRP £7.99). E-book also available. www.titanbooks.com



STAR WARS: SHATTERED EMPIRE

Before the Awakening

★★★★★

► **RELEASED 17 NOVEMBER**

► Publisher Marvel Comics

► Writer Greg Rucka

► Artists Marco Checchetto,

Angel Unzueta, Emilio Laiso

GRAPHIC NOVEL *The Star Wars*

Expanded Universe is gone for good, and since early 2014, Lucasfilm's new, more cohesive story canon has been largely keeping to the period between *Episodes IV* and *V* (especially in Marvel's current *Star Wars* and *Darth Vader* ongoing comics). However, with *The Force Awakens* about to arrive in cinemas and lots of questions to be answered,

they're now starting to give us our first proper glimpses of what came after the events of the original trilogy.

To fulfil this role there's a publishing campaign, not-so-snappily titled *Journey To Star Wars: The Force Awakens*. We've already had Chuck Wendig's post-*Episode VI* novel *Aftermath*. Now Marvel gets in on the act with four-issue miniseries *Shattered Empire*, now collected together as a graphic novel.

The story kicks off at the climax of *Return Of The Jedi*, in the midst of the battle to destroy the second Death Star. We're soon following the life of daring Rebel pilot

Shara Bey, who's also the mother of *Force Awakens* character Poe Dameron. Her husband Kes is a Rebel soldier, but despite the victory on Endor, their lives remain in danger as remnants of the Empire refuse to go quietly.

There are plenty of appearances from the main *Star Wars* characters throughout the story, and writer Greg Rucka does an excellent job of capturing the right tone, while also giving a strong, hard-edged feel to the story's military action. It's a rousing, fast-paced adventure that delivers the kind of high-stakes drama that *Star Wars* is best at, but it does end up struggling to make all its elements cohere.

The series arguably tries to fit too much material into its four issues, and between all the main character cameos (including a significant role for Princess Leia), it doesn't always feel like we get enough of the relationship between Shara and Kes that's supposed to be the heart of the story. The episodic pacing doesn't help matters, and the hinted connections with *The Force Awakens* are vague and perplexing.

Rucka still does an effective job though, while the art (largely done by Marco Checchetto) showcases the expected level of polish, giving the series a mix of emotive drama and epic space action. *Shattered Empire* remains an entertaining read, but isn't quite an essential one. Hopefully, any further explorations into the post-*Episode VI* world will do a smoother job of balancing continuity references and franchise requirements with a fully satisfying story. **Saxon Bullock**



i Checchetto's work will also be appearing in the upcoming prequel-era miniseries *Obi-Wan & Anakin*, starting in January.



A-ha have that effect on us too.

PHONOGRAM: THE IMMATERIAL GIRL

Lost In Music Videos

★★★★★

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Publisher Image Comics

► Writer Kieron Gillen

► Artist Jamie McKelvie

ISSUES 1-3 It once seemed like

an impossible comeback, but against the odds, Kieron Gillen and Jamie McKelvie's much-loved musical oddity *Phonogram* has been resurrected for a third and final outing. The cult-iest of cult comics, *Phonogram* exists in a zone somewhere between fantasy and music journalism, depicting a world where pop music genuinely is magic.

The Immaterial Girl shifts gears from the previous volume's anthology approach, instead focussing on eternally arch Phonomancer Emily Aster. Once a self-harming goth, Emily sold half her soul to gain success, but when a moment of doubt brings the missing half back for vengeance, Emily finds herself trapped in a world of '80s music videos.

This leads to some dazzling pastiches of classic videos like A-ha's "Take On Me", and both McKelvie and colour artist Matthew Wilson pull off wildly inventive touches. Gillen's script, meanwhile is as sharply intelligent as ever. *Phonogram* remains a gloriously niche series packed with in-jokes that will either delight or bewilder, but it's also firm proof that Gillen and McKelvie are one of the most creative writer/artist teams around. **Saxon Bullock**

i *The Immaterial Girl*'s other music video homages include "Thriller", "Material Girl" and "Total Eclipse Of The Heart".



But he's very nice to his mother.

CYBORG

The Man Machine



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Publisher DC Comics

► Writer David F Walker

► Artists Ivan Reis, Joe Prado

ISSUES 1-3 **DC really want you** to like Victor Stone, aka Cyborg. They've been upping this perennial supporting character's importance ever since he became a full Justice League member in 2011, and with a fully-fledged Cyborg blockbuster pencilled in for 2020 as part of DC's ambitious movie plans, it wasn't going to be long before he finally got his own monthly series.

The result, in these first three issues, is an engaging and traditional superhero saga that puts full emphasis on Victor's struggle to deal with the technology grafted onto his body. Having experienced an unexpected transformation following the theft of some of his cybernetics, he's showcasing new abilities – but his tech was stolen to help fight a war in another universe, a conflict that soon engulfs his home city of Detroit...

Writer David F Walker introduces enough emotional depth to make this a compelling read, while also adding plenty of setpieces and building up a varied supporting cast. The storytelling isn't exactly revolutionary, but the slick art from Ivan Reis and Joe Prado is extremely well-executed. *Cyborg* is well on its way to being a likeable, old-school addition to DC's superhero line-up. **Saxon Bullock**

i David F Walker's written a new novel starring blaxploitation hero John Shaft: *Shaft's Revenge* – the first since 1975.



Our editor does this too.

DAN DARE: THE 2000 AD YEARS Volume One

Dare to be different



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Publisher Rebellion

► Writers Pat Mills, Steve Moore,

Gerry Finley-Day

► Artists Massimo Belardinelli,

Dave Gibbons

GRAPHIC NOVEL **Judge Dredd** became the scowling face of 2000 AD, but it had originally banked on another icon to be its flagship hero, resurrecting Frank Hampson's Pilot of the Future from the pages of *Eagle*.

It made sense: Dan Dare was a name, redolent of post-war British decency, optimism and adventure. But this was the late '70s and the future had arrived in shades of *A Clockwork Orange*, soundtrack by the Sex Pistols and booted in the nuts by Dirty Harry. Punk-fired 2000 AD vaporised everything but the name, the squiggly eyebrows and arch foe the Mekon, retooling Dare as a leaner, meaner proposition, more inclined to yell, "Taste boot-leather, you two-headed freak!" than "Jumpin' jets!"

This collection reprints the first half of Dan's purist-baiting run in the comic (including bonus strips from early annuals and specials). At first he's Ziggy Stardust after a spell in boot camp: a vicious, pouting starfarer as freaky as his adventures. Massimo Belardinelli's art is science fiction at the mutational cusp of horror, phantasmagoric and mindblowing, *Barbarella* after a bad trip.

Dave Gibbons' stint dials down the high weirdness in favour of streamlined military adventure. This Dan's an adrenalised Biggles in a flying jacket, a degree closer to Hampson's original but now commanding a marvellously scurvy bunch of cosmic rogues, *Dart Dozen* style. You feel the inescapable shadow of *Star Wars* the moment he wields a "laser broadsword". It's gutsy, thrilling stuff. Fathers may have choked but this was the bionic generation's Dan Dare. **Nick Setchfield**

i There's a definite Bowie influence in the Belardinelli strips – Dan's female sidekick is actually called Ziggy.



Shà: a head for heights.

THE SPIRE

Tall tales



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Publisher Boom! Studios

► Writer Simon Spurrier

► Artist Jeff Stokely

ISSUES 1-3 **Fantasy and** murder mystery mesh well together, thanks to the inherent plot structure of the latter. Bringing to mind Mervyn Peake's *Gormenghast* crossed with *Blade Runner*, *The Spire* mostly takes place in the titular vast tower, home to a feudal-style post-apocalyptic society, populated by humans and all manner of hybrid creatures – the much-maligned Skews.

As this world's rocked by the death of the ruling Baron and a sequence of murders, writer Simon Spurrier combines China Miéville-esque phantasmagorical urban horror with *Game Of Thrones*-style royal intrigue.

Lead character Shà, head of the City Watch, is more like Judge Dredd than Inspector Morse, while her penchant for constant wisecracks owes much to the maverick spirit of Warren Ellis's motor-mouthed heroines.

Seemingly boasting more levels than the Spire itself, it's sometimes hard to keep up with the narrative. But the manga-flavoured figurework of Jeff Stokely provides some much-needed humour, while his always inventive panel layout particularly impresses with issue three's double-page spread of Shà descending into the Spire's depths. With its seamless meeting of story and art, this is a towering achievement. **Stephen Jewell**

i Next up for Spurrier: *Cry Havoc*, which apparently mixes *Jarhead* with *Pan's Labyrinth*. Issue one is out in January.

HALO 5: GUARDIANS

Locke and load

★★★★★

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Reviewed on Xbox One

► Publisher Microsoft

VIDEOGAME With Master Chief

AWOL shortly after the events of *Halo 4*, it's the job of Fireteam Osiris to track him down. You control two separate heroes: Jameson Locke, leader of Fireteam Osiris, and Master Chief himself, who commands Blue Team on the hunt for rogue AI Cortana, who is... not quite herself. Both teams consist of four Spartan super soldiers, leading naturally to some (as-yet untested by us) four-player online-only campaign co-op and a well-balanced AI squad operation.

On normal difficulty they take care of themselves well, providing suppressing fire as well as distraction. On heroic or legendary difficulties, however, squad commands offer an extra level of

control. Wide, tall maps facilitate team play, filled with special walls that can be broken through. You can even tell team-mates which vehicle to drive, which led us to a thrilling moment in which our Warthog was being pummelled by encroaching forces, only for backup to arrive on a Scorpion Tank and blow them all away.

This the fastest *Halo* yet. Your movement is more agile than ever, Spartans able to sprint indefinitely, slide on their knees, clamber up ledges, ram by performing a melee as they sprint, and briefly hover in the air if they aim while jumping.

“Your movement is more agile than ever”

It's almost like sci-fi parkour – combat in constant motion. 343 Industries really have skirmishes down to a fine art, layering up different combinations of weapons and enemies like a decadent trifle. No section outstays its welcome, with a constant procession of new experiences that refuse to be anything other than supremely fun.

And while returning players will have some idea of what to expect – the Warthog section, the flying level, the miniboss arena, the bit where a wave of small weak enemies charge and you one-shot them *Doom*-style – there are surprises in store. It's pleasingly familiar, yet with enough new features to feel fresh. Let's hope the online is as brilliant as it should be – when we finally get to play it... **Ben Griffin**

i Firefly's Nathan Fillion reprises his *Halo* role as Gunnery Sergeant Edward Buck, who's part of Fireteam Osiris.



Time for the chicken dance.



“Spaceship spaceship SPACESHIP!”

LEGO DIMENSIONS

Reach for the plastic

★★★★★

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Reviewed on PS4

► Also on PS3, Xbox 360, Xbox One, Wii U

► Publisher Warner Bros

VIDEOGAME How deep are your pockets? *Lego Dimensions* isn't just a single game in a box with a few bonus Lego toys – it's an expansive, expensive Lego platform with a vast range of dangerously appealing add-on elements.

In true Lego gaming fashion, different characters and vehicles have different skills, which will let you complete various puzzles as you progress through the adventure. But unlike those past Lego titles you know and love, you unlock these characters and accessories in *Lego Dimensions* by buying the actual models themselves, building them, and scanning them into the game.

While *Lego Dimensions* isn't among TT Games' best “pure” Lego games, it is a lot of fun. Playing with actual Lego adds a lot to the experience, and the Toy Pad peripheral proves to be quite the headscratcher as you're forced to bounce minifigs around its flashing panels. Deeper into the game, when levels open up somewhat (the homage to *Doctor Who*'s “Blink” is spectacular) and you start to explore the sandbox side-worlds, things click even more. This is, all told, a fun first toys-to-life attempt, but it's a little too blunt about wanting extra cash. **Matthew Pellett**

i The Starter Pack (RRP £80) gets you a Lego portal plus Batman, Gandalf and *The Lego Movie*'s Wyldstyle in-game.



FRIGHT NIGHT

Spooky sounds from the BBC



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

112 minutes | BBC Radio 4

RADIO DRAMAS **Halloween on Radio**

4 was an eerie treat, with two adapts of classic modern ghost stories.

First up: *The Stone Tape*, based on Nigel Kneale's 1972 TV play. A group of scientists discover that the walls of an old building have recorded the dying moments of a young woman. As they probe further, this "geo-acoustic phenomenon" begins to eat away at geophysicist Jill (Romola Garai).

Helmed by *Berberian Sound Studio* director Peter Strickland, it shares a similar love of sonic weirdness to that film, with screams bending and warping unnervingly around the listener. Matthew "Life On Mars" Graham's script, meanwhile, does a good job of trimming down the original

without losing its uniquely horrible atmosphere. An understated gem.

While *Ring*'s tale of a cursed VHS tape might not seem a good fit for audio, it works very well. The sound design is effectively unsettling and Naoko Mori's intermittent narration adds a sense of impending doom. By incorporating elements of Koji Suzuki's original novel, it's also nastier than the movie.

The Westernisation is a shame – it now revolves around a pair of ex-pats living in Tokyo – but makes sense from a language point of view, and it's certainly less egregious than the US movie remake. And a couple of small updates smartly bring the story into the present day, leading to an intriguing moral dilemma. **Will Salmon**

i If you missed the Halloween broadcast, you can catch both plays on iPlayer until the end of November.

DOCTOR WHO: DOOM COALITION 1

Eight versus Eleven



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

230 minutes |

► Publisher **Big Finish**

AUDIO CD **Creating a memorable**

Doctor Who villain isn't as easy as it looks – especially when it's a single character designed to go head-to-head with our time-travelling hero. Up until now, Big Finish have often been happier bringing back these kinds of adversaries than creating new ones, but with their latest Eighth Doctor box set, they've crafted their most attention-grabbing bad guy yet.

Doom Coalition 1 also continues Big Finish's new approach to the Eighth Doctor adventures, sticking with the multiple box set format employed for the *Dark Eyes* saga. This story will eventually run for four box sets (totalling 16 one-hour episodes), and pitches

the Eighth Doctor against The Eleven (Mark Bonnar), a Time Lord criminal whose previous ten personalities are still jostling for supremacy inside his head.

The action kicks off when The Eleven escapes from a maximum-security prison on Gallifrey, intent on causing chaos and exacting revenge on the Doctor



for originally catching him. The Doctor and current companion Liv Chenka (Nicola Walker) are soon pursuing him across time and space, following clues that lead them to '60s London and Renaissance-era Florence before a climactic confrontation with the maniacal Time Lord.

The four episodes are a well-balanced set of tales that deliver satisfying drama, from the atmospheric chills of "The Red Lady" to the action of "The Galileo Trap". Hattie Morahan is entertaining as additional new companion Helen Sinclair, while Bonnar does a good job of keeping The Eleven just on the right side of broad comic-book villainy.

The finale maybe isn't quite as impactful as it could have been, but overall this is a much stronger, more focused listen than the last *Dark Eyes* box set. So far *Doom Coalition* is shaping up to be a thoroughly enjoyable *Who* adventure. **Saxon Bullock**

i January box set *The Diary Of River Song* will also feature McGann's Doctor – but will he and River actually meet?



COLLECTABLES

What we've been playing with this month

1 "Highly stylised" is the best way to describe the likeness on this **Twelfth Doctor Talking Plush** (FPI price £14.99; product code C7500), who's sporting a glare so angry you'd think twice before placing him at the end of a child's bed. Judging by this, the approvals/design/manufacturing process for Doctor Who merch must take *forever*:

push his chest and he barks one of three phrases, but they're all snatches of the dialogue he delivered post-regeneration in the 2013 Christmas special (one is the exclamation concerning his new kidneys). Shame – this'd be twice as good if the mardyarse said, "I don't think I'm a hugging person now" when you give him a squeeze.

2 Funko continues its quest to find even more ways to cutefy your favourite sci-fi and fantasy characters with the new **Moopez range** (FPI price £8.99 each; product codes C9559, C9564, C9568, C9570, C9571, C9572, C9574, C9575). Aside from Rocket Raccoon (a smirker rather than a scowler) and the mouthless Spider-Man, this selection of DC

and Marvel heroes all come with the same blank eyes and facial expression, and are quite literally full of beans. Most notable thing about them? Despite all the styling, Spider-Man just looks like, er, Spider-Man.

3 It may have taken them 52 years but those delightful Danes have finally created a **Lego Doctor Who set**, and it's marvellous. It stems from the fan-designed Lego Ideas range and, curiously, depicts Matt Smith's two-year-old regeneration in "The Time Of The Doctor" – hence Peter Capaldi in a coat he wore for about 10 minutes. Still, that does mean you get two Doctors for the price of one, as



well as Clara, a Weeping Angel and two amazing Daleks. More importantly, it's well put together, particularly the pleasingly chunky TARDIS exterior, which can be detached and closed up.

4 The name's Plissken... and the height's eight inches. This **Snake Plissken**

Figure (FPI price £19.99; product code C1735) comes with all the accessories a fan of John Carpenter '80s classic *Escape From New York* could want: a removable jacket (suitably besmirched with muck), a wrist tracker, a holster, various weapons, and a swappable hand so he can grip 'em all. The likeness of Kurt Russell is pretty good too...

although his lips are perhaps just a shade too smoochably pink. Best bit: if you lift up his shirt you'll find Snake's tattoo of a rearing cobra present and correct on his chest.

5 These four **Star Wars mini glasses** (FPI price £8.99; product code D2889) – definitely *not* shot glasses, y'hear? – feature Chewbacca, Boba Fett, a Stormtrooper and Darth Vader, and would be perfect for... ooh, let us think... a *Star Wars* drinking game, perhaps? Maybe imbibe when someone has a bad feeling about something? But be warned: the artwork is somewhat wonkily wrapped around the glasses, which may make you feel a bit

squiffy even if it's just some cordial you're quaffing.

6 In need of a Man of Steel to prop up your graphic novels? Help is at superpowered hand with these **Superman Bookends** (FPI price £14.99; product code C6559). There's a distinct touch of Elvis about them, and not just the gleaming quiff – once you remove the books Supes is bustin' the kind of karate moves the King used to break out on stage in Vegas. You get a pair of Kal-El's in each set. Pro tip: decorate one with stubble and douse with Budweiser to create your own evil deadbeat doppelganger, *Superman III*-style. ●

THINGS TO COME

More goodies on their way soon



POP PINS

◆ Yet another new range from Funko! This time they're leaving figures behind entirely and branching out into badges, with a range of cute little round enamel pins. The first six feature Batman, Deadpool, the Flash, Harley Quinn, Iron Man and Loki.



WONDER WOMAN BRACELET

◆ Eminently giftable, publishers Running Press's latest "mini kit" features a 32-page book on Wonder Woman and an adjustable cuff bracelet. Health and safety warning: do not attempt to use this to deflect bullets.



PLUSH SUPER PETS

◆ Here's a pair of characters that it actually makes sense to recreate in cuddly form: Man-of-Steel-mutt Krypto the Super Dog, and SHAZAM!-powered rabbit Hoppy the Marvel Bunny. Both stand 9" tall and look completely adorable.



SEASON 1

FEAR THE WALKING DEAD

A spin-off looking for a reason to exist

▶ **UK Broadcast** AMC, finished
▶ **US Broadcast** AMC, finished
▶ **Episodes Reviewed** 1.01-1.06

❗ **It seems there's a good reason** Rick Grimes spent the first weeks of the zombie outbreak in a coma – if *Fear The Walking Dead* is anything to go by, he really wasn't missing that much.

This Los Angeles-set companion piece to the all-conquering *Walking Dead* tells a story that never needed to be told, rewinding the clock to the beginning of the infection that caused the dead to rise and society to fall. It's an odd place to go,

seeing as one of the main selling points of the original series and Robert Kirkman's comic were that they told the story of the survivors after the apocalypse. Trying to fill in the gaps now feels like a slightly retrograde step.

Across six episodes here, the show does very little that's unexpected. Indeed, it's a damning indictment of this spin-off that season five of the parent show felt way more inventive and groundbreaking. In *Fear The Walking Dead* the narrative path is mapped out from the start. You know that unlikely people will be forced to group together by the

outbreak. You know that a seemingly mellow person is going to be driven to an act of extreme violence. You know that a central character is going to die at some point – though it's rather safer to be a series regular here than in the parent show. Even nice guy Travis reluctantly shooting his infected ex-wife in the season finale feels like a case of déjà vu.

And we really don't learn anything we didn't know before. It's hardly a shock to find out that the zombie outbreak wasn't limited to the environs of Atlanta, Georgia. Or that the army moved in and declared martial law. In the

ZOOM IN



BEST EPISODE ▲

→ "Not Fade Away" (1.04) may not be big on action, but the gradual realisation that something sinister lurks behind the army's seemingly benign occupation makes for the show's most intriguing story arc.

IT'S WOSSISNAME!

→ Frank Dillane, who plays Nick Clark, was the young Voldemort in *Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince*.

BEST MOMENT

→ Seeing LA's lights go out in "The Dog" (1.03) is wonderfully eerie.

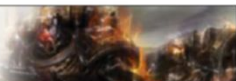
TRIVIA

→ *Fear The Walking Dead* had the highest rated debut season in the history of US cable TV.

MORE TRIVIA ▼

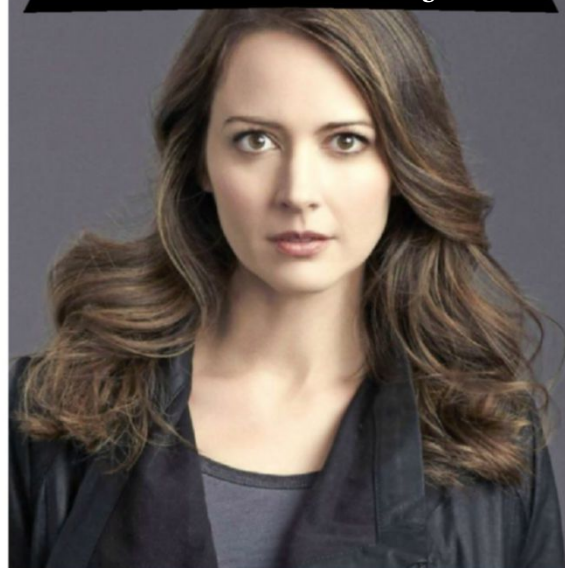
→ A 16-part companion web series, *Fear The Walking Dead: Flight 462*, is currently telling the story of a flight with an infected traveller. One of the characters from the web series will appear in season two of *Fear*...





★ BEST IN SHOW ★

The characters who make TV great



ROOT

The Machine's human avatar in
Person Of Interest

► UK Broadcast **Airs on Channel 5** ► US Broadcast **Returns to CBS in 2016**

❖ **Whether picking off** Russian gangsters like an unvirtual first-person shooter or dressing up in a bear costume for some mission, Root has become the breakout character on *Person Of Interest*.

Root is the kind of character every actress moans there aren't enough of on US telly: a female action hero who isn't just a bloke with lipstick. She's a woman who can take on the men on their terms while remaining 100% feminine. And no, that doesn't just mean she's allowed to wear sexy dresses every now and then, as would happen on many shows. She's a fully-rounded character who clearly delights in being a woman upsetting a man's world. Hell, she even has a lesbian crush on a teammate that doesn't come across as gratuitous and she's insistent that God is a woman; although God in her case is the Machine – the sentient

supercomputer built by Harold Finch.

She started out as an antagonist to Finch's team, a hacker for hire and sometime assassin (her business cards must have been interesting). On learning of the Machine's existence she became obsessed with finding it. Harold feared she wanted to destroy it. On the contrary, she wanted to free "her". The Machine was clearly flattered and was soon using Root as its human avatar. Communicating with her via earplugs the Machine could guide Root through action sequences – the onscreen results were spectacular.

Amy Acker – once Fred on *Angel* – has played Root with a sparkling charm throughout. Root could simply have come across like an automaton or puppet; Acker gives her a vulnerable charisma that means you have no choice: you have to root for her. **Dave Golder**



Piano lessons gone wrong? Oh, something like that...

absence of major revelations, it's like going through a checklist as the survivors learn the rules of the game: you can only kill a walker with a head shot; the dead don't need to have been bitten to come back as a zombie... Los Angeles may be a new setting, but it's pretty much the only thing that's changed.

The only justification for making a spin-off show is doing something radical with a format. *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* worked because it was set on a space station rather than a spaceship. *Star Trek: Voyager* didn't because it was just a lower quality retread of *The Next Generation* with a less memorable crew. *Fear The Walking Dead* already feels like this franchise's *Voyager* – the analogy even stretching as far as a core cast that lacks the charisma of Rick and co. Okay, it's early days – and *The Walking Dead* didn't get everything right at the beginning – but can anyone see Travis, Madison and Ofelia becoming fan favourites like Daryl, Carol or Michonne? Only the sharply dressed, morally ambiguous

“It drags down rather than enhances the original”

Strand emerges as someone you want to learn more about.

Come the season finale, with the city lost and a band of survivors planning their next move, we've effectively caught up with season one of the parent show – just with a different group of people. If we'd been able to follow the doctors working out how to battle the plague, the officials making decisions or the soldiers following their orders – a more 24 take on *The Walking Dead* – this could have felt essential. Instead we're left with a companion piece that drags down rather than enhances the original show. What a wasted opportunity.

Richard Edwards



Travis didn't get on with the neighbours.

Kiera and Alec wear those expressions quite a lot.



SEASON 4

CONTINUUM

Farewell to the time-traveller's life

► **UK Broadcast** Syfy from 17 November
► **Canada Broadcast** Showcase, finished
► **Episodes Reviewed** 4.01-4.06

❗ **It's never nice when a series** we love gets cancelled, but it *is* nice when there's enough warning for the show to go out on its own terms, without one of those bloody awful cliffhangers that are the bane of our lives. Thankfully *Continuum*'s final season – a curiously shortened chunk of six episodes – had enough “end is nigh” warning to weave a finale that satisfies on almost every level. There's a perfect conclusion to almost every single character's arc (and there are a *lot* of arcs to juggle), the action and drama keep the pulse rate up while those final acts play out, and the convoluted plotting finally unravels enough to

allow a peaceful final scene that makes so much sense you're surprised you didn't see it coming right from the very start. Somehow, the most complicated show on TV has managed to give us a simple, calm ending. And... relax.

The best thing about this final season, however, is that it ends at all – because *Continuum* was in real danger of collapsing under its own weight. This has never been the easiest of shows to watch, its time-travelling conundrums, political wrangling and soap-opera-style double dealings often threatening to confuse anyone not playing close attention – and even those who are. If another season had been greenlit, I suspect the series would have tried our patience a little too much: heck, there are even scenes in this

limited run that leave you feeling weary (how many times can Kellogg/Brad/Travis/Dillon/Alec/etc double-cross someone, anyway?). Soldiers jumping through portals to invade our time, Kellogg ruling the future and threatening his own self in the past, Kiera dilly-dallying with fellow time-traveller Brad, who may or may not be a traitor... And then throw in the show's only duff note, a mega-time-traveller who looks a bit like a hipster Jesus, and you've got a lot to take in.

And yet, of course, it's all immensely enjoyable, with killer fight scenes and so much chutzpah you wish other shows on TV would take note. Farewell, Kiera Cameron, Liber8 and your various messed-up realities: we will miss you. **Jayne Nelson**

ZOOM IN



BEST MOMENT ▲

→ In the penultimate episode there's a three-way brawl between Carlos, Travis and a super-soldier that results in the Vancouver Police Department blowing sky high. Choreography, stunts, direction – all flawless.

EASTER EGG

→ Season one's episodes all had “Time” in their titles; season two had “Second”, three had “Minute” and four has “Final.” The finale is named “Final Hour”.

TRIVIA

→ The final episode ends with this note: “A special thank you to our loyal fans.” There's something in my eye...

LMAO

→ Kellogg's final line, after having his time-travel plans sent wildly off course by Alec: “Oh, that little shit.”

DID YOU SPOT? ▼

→ In one episode Lucas and Alec – geniuses who make Bill Gates and Steve Jobs look dumb – play a Pong-like game. Because they can.



ROBINSON CRUSOE ON MARS

A lone U.S. astronaut pitted against all the odds beyond this earth!



**BYRON HASKIN'S CULT SCI-FI ADVENTURE, AVAILABLE ON
BLU-RAY AND DVD FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE UK THIS
NOVEMBER**

SPURIOUS AWARDS

Celebrating the silliest and strangest moments from the month in TV



DIRTY OLD MAN OF THE MONTH

No wonder Clara's off if the Doctor keeps using Dalek arms in suggestive ways on *Doctor Who*.



WIG OUT OF THE MONTH

Arrow's flashbacks have finally jettisoned Olly's terrible hairpiece. Good wiggance, we say.



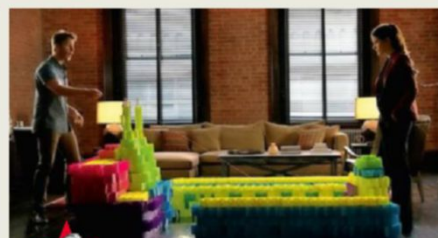
MOST IMPROVED SHOW OF THE MONTH

Thanks largely to Jerome, *Gotham* is immeasurably better in its second season. Bravo, would-be clown prince of crime.



FUNERAL ATTIRE OF THE MONTH

Maybe Carol just wanted to raise everyone's spirits on *The Last Man On Earth*.



CREATIVE POST-IT NOTE CONSTRUCT OF THE MONTH

Kudos to whoever made this ace paper model on *Limitless*.



DEJA VU OF THE MONTH

Minority Report's Hawkeye algorithm, a program which predicts crime, sounds suspiciously like the machine from *Person Of Interest*.



GUILT TRIP OF THE MONTH

Didn't feel bad about this innocent guy getting killed on *Heroes Reborn*? You will when this adorable pooch cuddles up to its deceased master.



POUND SHOP BANE OF THE MONTH

Atom-Smasher comes across as a budget Bane in *The Flash*.



HELLRAISER OF THE MONTH

Seems Pinhead will be calling by *Supernatural* this season.



QUIFF OF THE MONTH

The hairspray Matt Bomer must use on *American Horror Story*!

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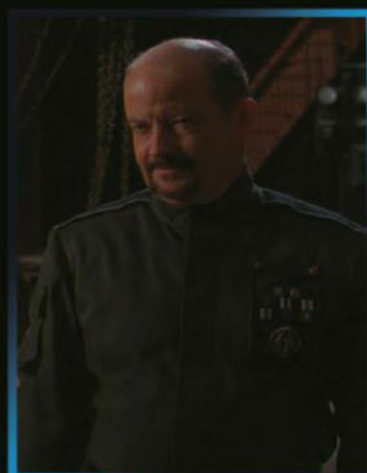
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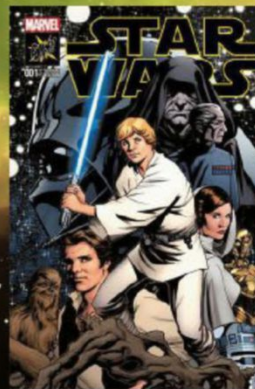
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CHRISTOPHER LEE

In honour of the late, great actor, 20 fiendish brain-teasers

Quizmaster: Russell Lewin, Production Editor

QUESTION 1

What was the name of the sequel to *The Wicker Man* made in 2010?

QUESTION 2

In exactly how many films did Lee portray Count Dracula? And we mean *all* of them!

QUESTION 3

In which 1977 film does Lee's mouth not move and his voice is dubbed on?

QUESTION 4 PICTURE QUESTION

True or false – Lee wore slippers while filming most of his part as Count Dooku.

QUESTION 5

Name the other horror legends who starred with Lee in 1983's *House Of The Long Shadows*.

QUESTION 6

Auf Wiedersehen, *Pet* star Jimmy Nail appeared with Lee in which horror film?

QUESTION 7

What major life event happened to Lee at the age of 25?

QUESTION 8

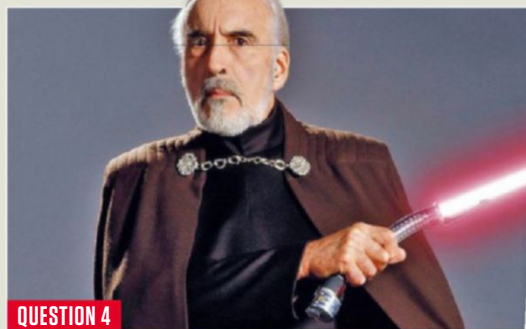
What did Lee claim about his 1977 film *Meatcleaver Massacre*?

QUESTION 9

Lee turned down a role in *Airplane!* which was eventually played by whom?

QUESTION 10

What character, besides Saruman, did Lee play in (exactly) five films?



QUESTION 4



QUESTION 11



QUESTION 19

QUESTION 11 PICTURE QUESTION

What was significant, chart-wise, about Lulu's Bond theme "The Man With The Golden Gun"?

QUESTION 12

What was the only film that Lee appeared in with Boris Karloff?

QUESTION 13

What does Lee sport in Jess Franco's *Count Dracula* that he doesn't sport in the Hammer *Dracula* films?

QUESTION 14

What does the "monster" keep repeating in 1973's London Underground horror *Death Line*?



QUESTION 15

Name the two Shakespeare plays that Lee starred in films of. Clue: they both have a ghost in them!

QUESTION 16

Tim Burton cast Lee as who in *Charlie And The Chocolate Factory*?

QUESTION 17

Which *Carry On* star was Lee's main rival for the part of the Creature in *The Curse Of Frankenstein*?

QUESTION 18

In what year did he become a Sir?

QUESTION 19 PICTURE QUESTION

What is this the film poster for?

QUESTION 20

With the rest of the crew out in New Zealand, where did Lee film his scenes for *The Hobbit: The Battle Of The Five Armies*?

How did you do?

Which Sir Christopher Lee film are you?



→ 0-5
Howling II



→ 6-10
To The Devil A Daughter



→ 11-15
Revenge Of The Sith



→ 16-19
The Curse Of Frankenstein

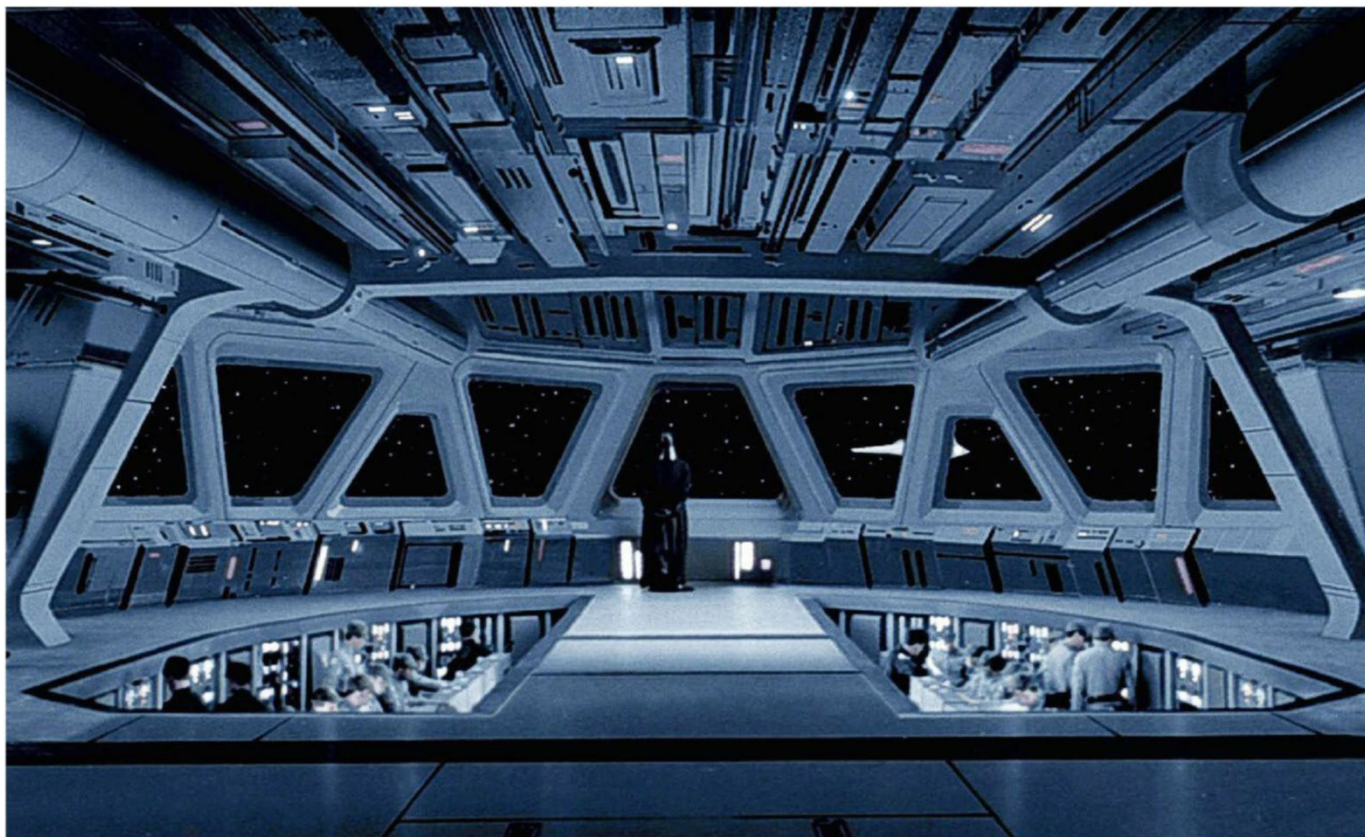


→ 20
The Wicker Man

Answers
1 The Wicker Tree 2 10 – 7 Hammer ones, Jess Franco's *Count Dracula*, a brief cameo in *One More Time* (1970), *Dracula And Son* (1976) 3 *Starship Invasions* 4 False – but Peter Cushing did in *Star Wars* 5 Peter Cushing, Vincent Price, John Carradine 6 *Howling II* 7 He lost his virginity! 8 That he had no idea he was going to be in it 9 Leslie Nielsen 10 Fu Manchu 11 It failed to chart in the UK 12 *Curse Of The Crimson Doors!* 13 A moustache 14 "Mind the doors!" 15 Hamlet, Julius Caesar 16 Dr Wonka (Willy's dad) 17 Bernard Bresslaw 18 2009 19 Castle Of The Living Dead 20 Pinewood, Bucks

Total Recall

Personal recollections of cherished sci-fi



THE IMPERIAL MARCH

Dave Bradley, Group Editor-in-Chief

Star Wars would be nothing without its music. A John Williams score gives any movie an epic texture. Can you imagine Luke gazing into the twin sunset set to the Hawk The Slayer disco guitar track? By far the most iconic theme in the series – outside of the opening fanfare itself – is “The Imperial March”, but what you may have forgotten is that it didn’t debut until *The Empire Strikes Back*.

John Williams wrote “The Imperial March” for the second film and it serves primarily as a piece of theme music for Darth Vader. As an example of a leitmotif, a recurring musical phrase that anchors us to places and people in the story, it’s first heard subtly when the probe droids are launched at the opening of *Episode V*, then flourishes into its full thumping beat when the Star Destroyers begin assembling under Vader’s command. Echoes of it crash through the battle of Hoth and the asteroid field scene. Later, in *Return Of The Jedi*, we hear it on the second Death Star – and finally again more quietly, played on a harp, as Vader ultimately dies.

Williams is often credited with reviving interest in grand orchestral scores for the cinema. His style draws on the large-scale classical



compositions enjoyed by the early pioneers of film, and *Star Wars* is the perfect example of this, an audio parallel to George Lucas’s love of the archetypal sci-fi serials. Like a lot of *Star Wars* music it owes a debt to Holst’s *The Planets*, particularly “Mars: The Bringer Of War”, but it’s creepier than that, with undertones of Chopin’s famous “Funeral March”. Whatever its ancestry, it’s a

beautifully dark, determined piece of music, melodramatic in its rousing villainy, an almost pantomime-like boo-hiss of a soundtrack for the Empire’s henchmen to strut along to. With the main melody in a minor key, the chords come fast and insistent as trumpets and trombones accelerate through a wall of menacing, militaristic sound.

The leitmotif of “The Imperial March” also finds its way into the prequels, a wisp of it colouring “Anakin’s Theme” and then the full thrum of it accompanying the Clone Troopers’ departure into war. We can only hope there’ll be a bit of it in *The Force Awakens* too, although the Empire itself is no longer with us. Is John Williams composing a First Order March variant especially, perhaps? ●

The SFX team play this music whenever Darth Bradley enters the office.

Fact Attack!

→ John Williams’ debut as a feature film composer was for 1958’s *Daddy-O*, a B-movie about street racing starring singer Dick Contino.

→ With 49 Academy Award nominations, John Williams is the second most nominated individual ever (after Walt Disney). He’s won five of them.

→ “The Imperial March” (and “Yoda’s Theme”) were first heard three weeks before *Empire* premiered, at a special concert in Boston.

→ All *Star Wars* movie music has been performed by the London Symphony Orchestra; back in 1978 they won three Grammy awards for it.

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NEXT MONTH!
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PAGE 27



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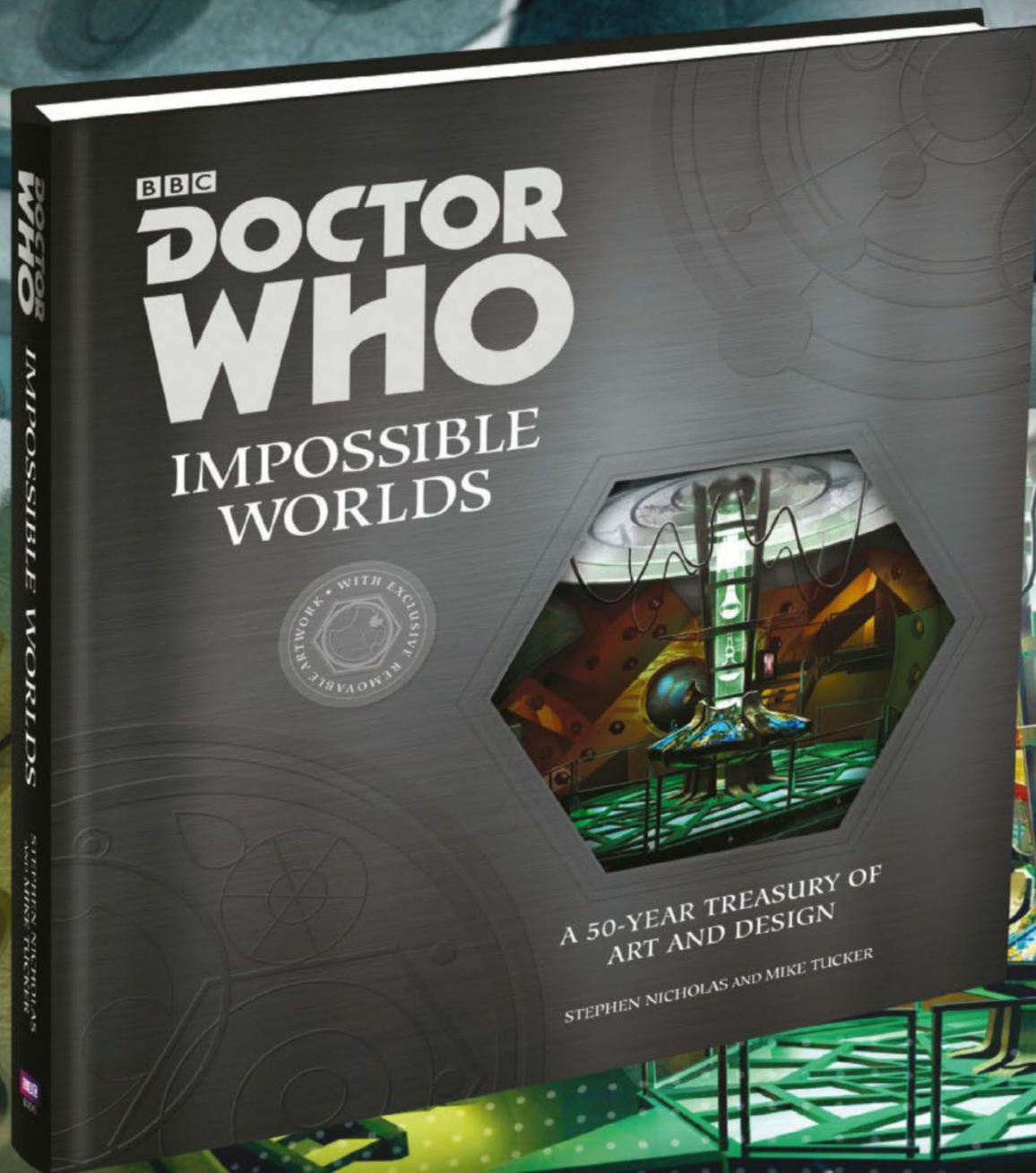


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